

2058
CRITICAL AND PRACTICAL
OBSERVATIONS,
ON
SCRIPTURE-TEXTS.

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JEHOVAH GIVETH WISDOM: OUT OF HIS MOUTH COMETH
KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING. PROV. ii. 6.

P E R T H:

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CRITICAL AND PRACTICAL

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MANY of the following thoughts were written long ago, at different times as they occurred: and as it is hoped they may tend to elucidate some important passages in the sacred volumes, they are now submitted to the inspection of the Public. So far as the author knows, they are either entirely new, or where the interpretation, at bottom, is the same with any that has been already published by others, the text, he imagines, is placed in a stronger point of light; so that the manner, at least is new.

Truth is like the light: the more clearly she is seen, the more she must be admired. The cavils of the Deists against the scriptures are founded on ignorance. No man can think lightly of the Scriptures, who really understands them. They are fools, who delight in scorning. The more clearly the scriptures are understood, the more irresistible the impressions of their divinity become. The critical knowledge of the Sacred Books has greatly encreased within these late years; and all the researches of the wise have only tended to destroy the subterfuges of Deism, and to establish the truth of the Gospel. Bad men and bigots will, no doubt, still go on to reject the truth; not because she has too little evidence, but because she has too much. By manifesting their folly she hurts their peace. Nothing disgusts a nest of owls so much as to let in a little light upon them.

The study of the scriptures is an employ of all
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others the most pleasing and profitable. They contain the wisdom of God; that which makes wise to salvation. To understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God, must be the highest attainment of man. This is promised to such as "seek wisdom as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures." This should influence every christian to search the scriptures, that the word of Christ may dwell in him richly, furnishing him with treasures more excellent than gold. Nor can he do a greater service to mankind, than to communicate to others any idea, which may serve to throw a lustre around any passage in the oracles of wisdom. This motive has had weight with the author of the following sheets: and if they shall be blessed of God for promoting, in any degree, the knowledge of the Scriptures; if they shall contribute to illustrate any portion of the sacred oracles, to enlighten the mind, to warm the heart with the love of the truth, or to direct the steps of the christian in his way to the heavenly kingdom, the end of their publication will be fully answered.

CRITICAL

CRITICAL AND PRACTICAL
OBSERVATIONS

ON

SCRIPTURE TEXTS.

OBSERVATION I.

PSAL. viii. 3. 4.

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the Moon and the Stars which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the Son of Man, that thou visitest him?

THESE words are commonly viewed as containing a reflection, naturally resulting from comparing the magnitude and grandeur of the heavenly bodies, with the littleness of man. As if the Psalmist had said, When I consider attentively, the stupendous fabric of the heavens; when I reflect on the power, by which bodies of such magnitude and splendor were formed; the wisdom and contrivance which has ballanced them with so much exactness, and still regulates and adjusts their motions; while at the same time, I view the whole as a superb palace, erected and adorned for the use of man, I am astonished

at that benignity, which has shewn so much respect for a creature, so undeserving of it. Man, in his natural state, is but a weak, little, passing thing: in his moral state, a sinner. What is man then in any point of view, that his Maker should have been so mindful of him.

This sense is not unnatural. All the ways of God to men, are wonderful; and the more we attend to the greatness of this system of visible existence, with which we are connected, and from all of which we derive utility and delight, although the most weak and helpless originally, and ultimately the most wicked of all its inhabitants, the higher our astonishment must rise. Yet this does not seem to be the ultimate design of the Holy Spirit in this passage. It is evident, from the application made of the second verse of this psalm, by our Lord and Paul, (Mat. xi. 25. xxi. 16. Cor. i. 27.) that by the babes and sucklings in that verse, the apostles and other illiterate and despised persons are meant. Now, supposing the sense of the third and fourth verses to be as above, it will be difficult to find any connection, between them and the foregoing.

This difficulty and all others will be removed, by consulting the second chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, from the sixth to the tenth verse, where we find the fourth and following verses of this psalm expressly applied

ed to Christ. The New Testament is the key to the Old, by which the full and sublime sense of what David in the psalms and the prophets wrote, alone can be attained. According to this infallible interpreter, Christ is the man of whom God has been mindful, and the Son of Man whom he has visited in so kind a manner. He sees Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honour, and set over the works of God's hands: in this respect, he far excels the angels, to whom God has not put in subjection the world to come, or the dispensation of things in the gospel kingdom.

This view of the text may seem to perplex the sense. Immense, superb, and splendid as this system is with all its gay furniture, is it a palace too magnificent for him, who is the brightness of the Father's glory, his elect in whom his soul delighteth? How then can David express so much astonishment on a review of the condescension and love of God to this man, in rearing a structure so vast in extent, and rich in furniture for his use? To obviate this objection, it is necessary to observe, that as the spirit of inspiration speaks in the second verse of the times of the gospel, so in these he points to our Saviour in the light in which the gospel exhibits him, as set down on the right hand of the throne

throne of the majesty in the heavens, far above all principalities and powers. Then he was made Lord of all, having all power in heaven and in earth given to him. Then he revealed the councils of wisdom by his spirit to the apostles, the babes and foolish things of the world, that by them he might confound the wise. Now all judgment is given him for this very reason because he is the Son of man.

Full of this idea, is it any wonder if a christian stand amazed; if he cry out, when I look up to the heavens, and behold the amazing works of God's fingers, the sun, moon, and stars, I admire the whole; but when I direct my attention to the highest point of elevation and dignity in heaven, I see something more wonderful than all the rest: I see Jesus or human nature in the person of the Son of God, crowned with glory and dignity, and set far above all the works of God! who, beholding an object so surprising, would not cry out, Lord! what is human nature, that it should be so highly exalted! that it should be united to the divine nature by an union the most intimate and eternal, and set far above every rank of created dignity! who in looking into the heavens could have expected to have seen human nature there, particularly in a situation so elevated and splendid; a nature so weak.

weak in its innocent state, and so wicked, deformed and inglorious in its fallen condition!

In this view the exclamation in the text is highly natural. The christian is the best astronomer. He surveys the hosts of heaven with an intelligence and surprise not inferior to that of the mere naturalist: but he looks higher still. His faith is the substance and evidence of things unseen by the eye of flesh, in regions unpierced even by the more enlarged enquiries of the philosophic tube. Aided by the light of inspiration, he sees far above all heavens; where the man Christ Jesus, the light of the universe, pours unapproachable effulgence through the boundless regions of bliss. This astonishes all intelligent beings. That God should pour all the effluence of his benevolence through a Man, as the medium of divine communications, is a circumstance in the plan of providence, which fills the angels with amazement: and how surprising will it be to the enemies of the Lamb, when they one day look up to the heavens, and see the man whom they despised as a vile reproach, a worm and not a man, invested with all the divine glories, and swaying the sceptre of heaven and earth!

The gospel sets heaven before us in a new light. The Lamb in the midst of the throne, is a new thing in heaven, unknown to the ages previous to the ascension of Jesus. This
new

new thing calls forth new wonder and furnishes a subject for new songs. In his exaltation all saints are deeply interested. God has set him at his right hand as the representative of all who believe in him. Hence we are said to be quickened together with Christ, to be raised up and made to sit together in heavenlies in Christ Jesus. When we see him exalted, we see ourselves exalted in him. Our hearts are set down with him, and our persons shall be there in a little. It is but for a little time we are made lower than the angels. Our head is already crowned with superior glory, and the body must participate of the honours of the head. Lifting our eyes to heaven then, we may well say, Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the Son of Man, that thou visitest him.

OBSERVATION II.

ISAIAH vi. last verse.

But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten, &c.

TO understand the meaning of this verse, it is necessary to know the time of the events mentioned in this chapter. That Isaiah here speaks of our Lord's day, and describes the temper and dispositions of the
Jews

Jews in that period, seems quite plain from the application made of this passage by the infallible interpreter, Christ himself. In Matt. xiii. 13.—15. he tells his countrymen, that Isaiah spoke of them, when he said, “By hearing ye shall hear and shall not understand” &c. In this obstinate temper, unsusceptible of conviction, they remained “till the land was utterly desolate,” ver. 11. 12. Yet, says the prophet, at this time, or about this period, there shall be in Jerusalem “a tenth, and it shall return, and it shall be eaten,” &c. What this tenth is, we may learn from the last clause of this verse, which according to the Hebrew manner is a repetition of the first in different words. “The Holy Seed shall be her substance,” support or nourishment. The Holy Seed shall be to Jerusalem or the church, what bread is to the body. Now Christ is the Holy Seed, the principles of whose generation, were perfectly pure: he is “the Holy Thing” born of the virgin, and is explanatory of the tenth which is said to return and to be eaten, as he alone is the substance and support of the church. In an inferior sense, indeed, it may be applied to his disciples, who are called his seed, his sons, &c. as we shall see afterwards.

But why is Christ called “a tenth?” In answer to this it must be observed, that by the Law of Moses, a tenth or tithe of every man’s

man's substance was impropriated by God, or it was ordered to be given to those, who ministered to the Lord in holy things. See Numb. xviii. from ver. 21. to the end. The Levites were appointed to receive all the tithes, and the tenth of the tithes were set apart for Aaron and his Sons, and hence were said to be offered to the Lord, and to be holy. Again, the shew-bread or bread of faces, which was appointed to stand on tables before the Lord continually, and was wholly to be eaten by the priests in the holy place, is ordered to be made of tenths. Lev. xxiv. 6. &c. The manna, too, which was also holy bread, was gathered by tenths, a tenth for every man, and a tenth of it was laid up before the ark, there to remain so long as the ark endured. Exod. xvi. 16. 33. 36. "An Omer is the tenth of an Ephah." In short, all the bread of God, all that was hallowed under the Law, and set apart for holy purposes, was measured by tenths.

A tenth, then, in general signified something sacred, dedicated to God; something of the nature of food, and which might be called the bread of God. All this was but a shadow of a good thing to come, and Christ may most properly be said to be the substance of it. The Word can be applied to none but to him in its full significance. He was separated from the common mass of mankind

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mankind from the very womb, and *Holiness to the Lord* was the motto most descriptive of his character. He was separated for holy purposes, as all the tithes were. He, too, is the bread of faces which stands before Jehovah in heaven always ; the bread appointed for the spiritual priesthood under the gospel ; and he that eateth him shall live by him. He himself, also, tells us that he is the bread of life, the bread of God, which came down from heaven ; the true manna, the food of all the " holy nation " of believers, of which if a man eat, he shall live for ever. Thus every tithe of old, in its prophetic or future sense, meant Jesus Christ.

Concerning this tenth we are told " It shall return, and it shall be eaten ; " or rather, it having returned, shall be to be eaten, *i. e.* it is provided for this end that it may be eaten as the tithes of old were. In order that Christ might become food for his people, he died, was buried, and returned from the grave. Now it is his returning from the grave that lays a sufficient foundation for our faith in him as our Redeemer. If he had not been able to raise up himself, our faith in him as the principle of our resurrection is certainly vain. Hence he is said to have risen for our justification, or to justify our faith in him for our own resurrection. He is then properly said to have returned that he might be eaten, or that he

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might

might be believed on, or become a proper object of our faith in him for eternal life. Eating in scripture, in its mystical sense, always signifies believing*.

It is easy to understand the next clause of the verse from what has been said. "As the Teil tree, and as the Oak, when they cast their leaves, have substance or juice in themselves, so the Holy Seed, Christ, the tenth believed on,

* It is worthy of remark, that *gnasbar* in Hebrew, the word which in that language signifies a tenth, originally denotes riches. This points out to us an interesting instruction. The tenth or tithe of our goods, was the portion devoted to religious uses, or charitable purposes, so early as the time of Abraham. This is the portion which God required in his law given to Israel—a portion not to be used by us, but given to the Lord. Yet this alone is called our riches. The tenth is only the rich number. This may seem strange, if not absurd, to the friends of this world: yet a little attention will convince us of the propriety of the idea. What we use, perishes in the using; what we lay by us or hoard up, we leave to others, and so it is another man's, and not ours; what we give away from a principle of religion and according to its rules, we lend it to the Lord, and have the strongest assurance of receiving it again. "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again." Prov. xix. 17. This is God's Bill for our money, Goods or Services. Our Lord also assures us, that if we give but a cup of cold water, to a disciple, in the name of a disciple, it shall have a reward. With what propriety, then, does Paul call giving our goods for religious purposes a "laying by us in store." 1 Cor. xvi. 2. And again, "laying up for ourselves a good foundation" (a good stock) "against the time to come." 1 Tim. vi. 18. 19. This then, is our proper riches, which we shall assuredly enjoy. We have God's bill for the whole, and he will repay it with full interest. The tenth, or what we give to the Lord, then, is still the rich number. This alone we lay up for ourselves, and not for another. Hence, alluding to this sense of the word, Paul calls the charitable, rich in good works. What we lay out on human securities, and do not enjoy, is laid out for another, nor is it certain, as the best human security may fail: But what we give out on the divine bond, we lay it out for ourselves; and our enjoyment of it is infallibly certain.

on, shall be the substance of Jerusalem." The holy city is often called a tree, Ez. chap. xvii. xix. And God frequently foretold that she should "wither in all the leaves of her spring," or she should lose her children. Now at this time, Jerusalem was beginning to wither like a tree at the fall of the leaf, and ere the end of that generation, her people were "removed far away, and then there was a great forsaking in the midst of the land." Yet at that very time Christ came, who became the bread, the support of life at Jerusalem, and is still and shall be for ever the sole support of the church. Christ is in us the hope of glory, the support of our souls, amid the severest winter we can feel below; and even when death strips us of all our glory, as the winter-blast robs the forest of its leafy honours, Christ will be in our very bodies as the principle of the resurrection, and even in the grave we shall know that he is to us "the resurrection and the life." We can now say of this body, "There is hope of this tree, that if it be cut down, it will sprout again," for the virtue of the spirit of the new man in it, will be the power of its resurrection. When like the Oak, we shall shed our leaves and decay, Christ shall be our substance, and by his influence we shall revive and flourish for ever in the courts of our God. As the sap in the tree, during

the winter, is the principle of its vegetation when the spring arrives, so he that eateth Christ's flesh, and drinks his blood, Christ dwells in him, and he will raise him up at the last day, the day which shall revive "the trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified."

The word and spirit of Christ dwell in us, and are the nourishment of Christians. Thus they are called the "Holy Seed" also, being members of Christ's body. These are still in the church, and are the substance of it, and of the earth itself, which stands on their account, as a theatre for the display of grace and redeeming love. The apostles, however, next to their master, are here pointed at, as these were the substance of Jerusalem, when she seemed like a withered shrub, blasted by the malevolence of the Roman army. These are the holy seed which dwell and grow in their doctrines and spirit in the Church still.

The best things are often unnoticed and despised. The words of Christ were disregarded by the Jews, and his gospel seemed to them the most contemptible thing. Yet this was the life of the church, when she was not only faded, but almost totally cut down. The power of this truth, appeared to sleep indeed for a time, like the sap of a tree in winter, but when the breath of the gospel-spring

spring came, in the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, instantly it was roused to action, and exerted itself with so much vigour, that the decayed tree was soon cloathed with more and fresher leaves, and extended her branches wider than ever before. She budded, she blossomed, and filled the face of the world with fruit. So far are God's ways above our ways, and his thoughts above our thoughts!

As the conduct of Providence, towards the Jews, has been all along peculiar, so the intention of placing them in that peculiar situation, and of that amazing chain of events which have befallen them is astonishing. This earth has been frequently viewed under the notion of a huge animal body, whose seas, rivers, &c. correspond to the blood vessels of an animal, which connected together, either by discernible or secret communications, diffuse their contents through the whole mass, to subserve the purposes of nutrition, vegetation, &c. The scripture seems to exhibit the moral world in the same light. The heart is the source of motion, from whence the blood and other juices are conveyed by innumerable canals through the whole body. Jerusalem was placed in the midst of the earth, and from her proceeded all the true knowledge of God, which was to be found in the various nations around her, before the

incarnation of the Saviour. The heart, too, is animated before the other parts of the body. It is the seat of life, from whence its influences are diffused through the whole system. Our spiritual life, in the same manner, comes through the Jews. Christ our life sprang from the Jews, and his gospel which is spirit and life, beginning at Jerufalem, circulated through all the world, conveying health, nutrition, vigour and joy to all the nations. The head itself is indebted to the heart, and performs its functions with a vivacity and precision, proportionable to the briskness and regularity of the animal fluids, to propel which is the business of the heart. So the blood of Calvary, and the spirit of Zion, are a spirit of animation even in heaven itself, the head of the moral world. When Jesus ascended to heaven in his blood and spirit, the life of the world, he filled the glorified hosts and superior intelligences, with clearer ideas and warmer joys, than e'er they knew before, and still the salvation of Calvary is the spirit of their songs. Archangels themselves are indebted to Jerufalem, as the vehicle of their bliss. Moreover, the heart conveys its juices by means of some principal vessels called arteries; and the gospel the preaching of the blood and spirit of Jesus, was communicated through the apostles to all the world. Thus they were the principal arteries

teries of the new man, and their writings subserve the same purpose to this day. I may add, that as the return of the blood to the heart, serves to renew and continue animal life and motion, so when the gospel returns to Jerusalem, the apostle tells us, it shall be as life from the dead. Rom. xi. 15. So strong is the analogy between the old and new man, the world of nature, and that of grace; and so true is this assertion—The holy seed of the Jews shall be the substance and life of the earth!

OBSERVATION III.

MATT. V. 33. 34.

Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine Oaths. But I say unto you, swear not at all, &c.

THERE are two principal rules for explaining any part of scripture—We must consult the context, so that the explication may agree with it; and we must not make one text oppose another, since all the parts of scripture must harmonize. Let us apply these to the text before us.

If we shall explain it with the Quakers as a prohibition of every kind of oath, we must
oppose

oppose Christ to himself, who gave his oath before the High-Priest, when it was administered to him according to the Jewish form, Matt. xxvi. 63. 64. I adjure you, or I make you swear by the living God, whether thou be the Christ the Son of God. Jesus said to him, thou hast said, or I am. Mark xiv. 61. 62. We must also oppose Christ to Paul, who, on a variety of important occasions, takes God to witness to the truth of what he says, Rom. ix. 1. Gal. i. 20. 2 Cor. i. 23. This is at least the substance of an oath. In Heb. vi. 16. he evidently speaks of an oath among men, as the end of strife, with approbation, since he tells us at the same time, that in like manner, God willing to shew to the heirs of promise, the immutability of his counsel, hath confirmed it with an oath. To evade these arguments, Barclay, the famous apologist for the Quakers, tells us, that if Paul swore, he sinned; and gives Paul the lie in the most direct manner, by asserting that God never swore an oath; while Paul avers, that God swore by himself, and confirmed his promise by an oath. So directly does the spirit in the Quakers, contradict the spirit speaking in Paul! Yet this is no wonder, since it contradicts itself. Barclay admits, that an oath consists in taking God to witness, that what we say is truth; and owns, that on occasion, in matters of great moment, the Quakers have said,

said, *We speak the truth in the fear of God, and before him, who is our witness and the searcher of our hearts.* This is certainly an oath, according to his own definition of one; yet at the same time, he is arguing against every kind of oath.

Yet there must be a sense, in which swearing is unlawful, since our Saviour says expressly, *swear not at all*; and James has repeated the prohibition with redoubled fervency, Chap. v. 12. "Above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, nor any other oath," &c. The common opinion of interpreters is, that our Lord here prohibits swearing in ordinary conversation, but this makes the text disagree with the context. It is evident, that the swearing prohibited in verse 34. is that which is said to have been commanded of old time, in verse 33. Now every one must admit, that profane swearing, or swearing in common talk, and on trivial occasions, never was enjoined by God, nor even by any pretended oral tradition. Others think, that our Saviour forbids swearing by any but God alone, as the Jews were commanded to swear by his name. *Swear not by heaven, earth, &c.* that is, say they, swear by God only, and not by any creature. But this is expressly opposite to Christ's own explanation, Matt. xxiii. 22. "Whoso sweareth by heaven, sweareth by the
the

the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon." Consequently to prohibit swearing by heaven, is to prohibit swearing by God himself. It also contradicts James, who says, swear not at all, neither by heaven, for it is God's throne, nor by any other oath. Nor does it agree with the context, since the swearing mentioned, verse 33, and prohibited verse 34, is swearing oaths to the Lord and not swearing by creatures.

To understand this prohibition, then, it is necessary to observe, 1st, That this whole sermon is intended, to direct the conduct of Christ's disciples, as members of his church and subjects of his kingdom; 2d, The oaths here forbidden, are not oaths among men, as subjects of the civil state, for ending strife in civil life. Christ never came to alter the political constitutions of the kingdoms of this world. The oaths intended are plainly these mentioned in verse 33. Oaths or vows made to the Lord, in which people swear to do something religious, or to devote something to the Lord; as is clear from the words themselves, "Thou shalt perform to the Lord thine oaths." Religious oaths or vows, are obviously here meant, as these only can be performed to the Lord. An oath for ending strife, is a declaration, wherein we take God to witness, that what we aver is truth. Now although this declaration be sworn by
God,

God, yet it cannot be performed to God; as herein we engage to perform nothing, but only declare in the most solemn manner what we saw or heard, spoke or did. Even the Oaths of allegiance, &c. administered by the Magistrate to persons entrusted with offices in the state, are only oaths wherein we engage to do something for men, and so are oaths among men, or civil oaths. These are not the oaths prohibited by Jesus; and so there is no contradiction between Paul and his master*.

The sense of the text must be limited by the context; and that the oaths in verse 33. are religious vows, is not only plain from what has been already said, but also from the portion of scripture, which our Lord has in his eye on this occasion. It is allowed that he refers to Deut. xxiii. 21. 22. 23. "When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it." &c. Now

* I know it has been said, That a person is said to *pay his Oath to the Lord*, when he fulfils a promise confirmed by an Oath; because he that calls God to Witness, does not so much oblige himself to the party he makes a promise to, as to God. So Joshua adhered to the promises he made to the Gibeonites; not for the sake of the Gibeonites, who had deceived him, but because of the obligation he was under to God, to whom he had appealed as witness, in making a covenant with that people. Josh. ix. 19. The Heathens understood an oath in the same light. Thus Isocrates ad Demonicum says, "First worship the Deity, not only by offering sacrifices, but by keeping your oaths." If the oaths in the passage before us, be taken in this latitude, then all *promissory* oaths, whether civil or religious, are unlawful under the gospel. This, however, militates nothing against giving our testimony upon oath for putting an end to strife; or in other words, it does not condemn *assertatory* oaths.

Now nothing can be more evident, than that the oaths in these verses, are vows made to the Lord, even free-will offerings, and consequently, were to be performed to the Lord, as in verse 23. "That which is gone out of thy lips, thou shalt keep and perform, even a free-will offering, according as thou hast vowed unto the Lord thy God," &c. A vow is a promise by oath to afflict the soul, or to perform some part of service, or to devote some part of our time or worldly goods to God, in gratitude for some worldly blessing. Such are the vows related, Numb. xxx. and Lev. xxvii.; and such were the vows of Jacob, Hannah, &c. Such vows were extremely common in our Saviour's day, as appears from Matt. xv. and xxiii. chapters; and they were also used to subserve the vilest purposes.

All these are expressly abolished by the Lord, as inconsistent with the gospel dispensation.

All the free-will offerings which the gospel requires, must be the gifts of the heart. Love to Christ, who loved us, must influence us to all obedience, without the unavailing carnal aid of oaths and vows. If we give or do any thing in religion, because of our oaths and vows, Christ regards it not. All our offerings must be the result of the love of God, the alone christian motive constraining to
good

good works: and where love is wanting, neither oaths nor vows can bind. Christianity is love. Accordingly Paul tells us what offerings we must offer under the gospel, Rom. xii. 1. 2 Cor. viii. and ix. chapters, Heb. xiii. 15. 16. but he no where desires us to offer these by vowing or swearing: nor in the whole New Testament do we read of any swearing or vowing to the Lord. Paul, indeed, vowed, but not according to the gospel, as he therein conformed himself to the Jewish ritual, and suffered for it.

Vowing was an ordinance of the ceremonial law. Had it been moral, it would have been a sin not to vow: whereas the Law said, "If you forbear to vow, it shall not be sin in you." Hence the Son of Man, as Lord of the ritual system, has expressly abolished it.

In baptism and the Lord's supper, indeed, we declare our belief in, and satisfaction with the covenant sealed with the blood of Jesus, and profess our resolution to perform the love-obligations, which this covenant lays us under. But this is quite distinct from the vowing mentioned in the verses under review. In these ordinances we come under no new obligations; but we come there to see the cords wherewith God has bound us, and to declare our cheerful acquiescence in them, seeking at the same time, to find their more forcible impressions on our souls. In these

we see the Love of Christ most warmly exhibited, and if this do not bind us to God, we dare not use any other bonds to bind our souls. For although it was said of old time, Thou shalt perform your vows to the Lord; yet Jesus says now, "Vow not at all."

But let your communication be yea, yea, and nay, nay. If we must not swear at all as Christians, or in our religious intercourse with one another, it may be asked, how then shall we confirm our words, when called to give any declaration of importance, so that our brethren in the church may have the strongest assurance of the truth of what we say? Our Saviour answers, let your communication be Yea, Yea, &c. The repetition of the same words at the same time, is considered in scripture, as the most solemn asseveration of the truth of what is spoken. Thus in Gen. xli. 32. God's intimating a thing twice, is explained as signifying his unalterable determination to bring it to pass. Also, when God declares his intention of taking the kingdom from Belshazzar, as unalterably fixed, he confirms it by a repetition of the same words, *mene, mene*; It is numbered, it is numbered. The days of your reign are numbered, and this is the last day of the sum. When David would shew the certainty of this Truth, God is powerful, he says "Twice have I heard this, Power belongeth

eth unto God." Moreover, when Jesus himself, the perfect pattern of Christians, would confirm any assertion, so that we may have the highest possible assurance of the truth of it, he does not swear by any oath, but repeats the word *verily*, Jo. v. 19. 24. 25. vi. 47. 53. &c. So when he speaks of himself as a witness, he calls himself the *amen*, i. e. *verily*, because he confirmed his testimony by repeating the word *amen*, or *verily*. In this he has commanded us to imitate him. Confirm your testimony, says he, not by an oath, but by a solemn repetition of your Yea or Nay.

Christians, then, in all church concerns, must rest upon the doubled Yea or Nay of their brethren, even in matters of the greatest importance. And, indeed, if we cannot trust the solemn averment of any man, he ought not to be reckoned a brother in Christ at all; as it would argue the grossest uncharitableness, to doubt the truth of what is attested in so solemn a manner, by those whom we consider as of the truth, having the truth of Christ dwelling in them. If we find that any person has concealed a lie under his Yea or Nay, we cannot account him any more as a brother. At the mouth of two or three witnesses, solemnly giving their Yea, Yea, every thing is to be established among Christ's disciples; and whatever is added in Church

concerns, "cometh of the evil one," who sows the seeds of jealousy in the minds of brethren, from whence spring contentions, and every evil work.

The above view of this passage lets us see the mistake of those, who think that our Lord only directs us, in this text, with regard to our demeanour in common conversation, our Saviour himself, never doubled his asseveration, but in matters of great importance. Does not this say, that we should only do the same on similar occasions? It would be ridiculous to repeat our Yea and Nay in all the trifling occurrences, which furnish materials for the common conversation of life.

It is proper to observe here, that nothing in the above view of this text, militates against the administration of oaths in national church courts. Whatever respect individuals in these courts may entertain for the laws of Christ, yet every sensible man among them admits, that the courts themselves as such derive all their authority from the civil magistrate, and consequently they must square their conduct by the rules he prescribes for them. In this case, oaths in them come under the description of civil oaths.

As a Christian, then, I cannot condemn an Oath, among men for ending strife: yet as a member of the civil state, I would humbly offer my opinion on that head. Oaths
taken

taken on trifling occasions, or too frequently repeated, are undoubtedly sinful; and in any case whatever are generally of little real importance. An honest man will speak the truth without an oath, while a knave will swear a lie. The administration of oaths, then, multiplies occasions of sin. "When thou believest that a man will not speak the truth," says Chrysostom, "for what end wilt thou force him to swear?"

OBSERVATION IV.

GEN. iii. 8.

And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day.

COMMENTATORS seem to agree, that the phrase "Cool of the day" denotes the time or hour of the day, in which Jehovah made his appearance to Adam. This seems, however, to be a mistake, as this phrase is no where used in Scripture, to express any part of time whatsoever. If we consult the original text, all is clear. It reads thus: Adam heard the sound of Jehovah God walking in the garden upon the wind of the day, &c.

It is evident from scripture, that Jehovah the Son, the only visible God, appeared to Adam,

Adam, so soon as he was created, and on many after occasions. Adam heard his voice, and held familiar conversation with him, as a man does with his friend. Then, and ever afterwards, in all the ages, previous to his incarnation, Jehovah seems to have made the sound or rushing of wind, the visible symbol of his appearance. Thus he announced his approach to Job xxxviii. 1. He answered him out of the whirlwind, and said, &c. So he appeared to Ezekiel in the vision; chap. i. 4. This also was the sign whereby David knew, that Jehovah was gone out before him to smite the host of the Philistines, 1 Chron. xiv. 15. When he heard the sound of a rushing on the tops of the mulberry trees, he knew it was the sound of Jehovah going out to destroy his enemies. And as this had always been the sign of the approaching deity, the coming of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles, was announced in the sound of a rushing mighty wind. Acts xxi. 2. Hence God is said to walk upon the wings of the wind, and to make the clouds his chariot. Now as this was the usual token, whereby Adam knew the approach of his Maker, so soon as he heard the sound of wind, issuing from a cloud walking among the trees of Eden, he was apprized of the approach of the offended Jehovah; and alarmed by his fears, the attendants on guilt, he ran to hide himself

self from the divine presence, among the thickets of the garden.

The first ages of the church, were ages of figure: all the divine dispensations, and Institutions, prefigured better things to come. God seems to have chosen a cloud, or wind, as the vehicle of conveying his voice, or the intimation of his will to our fathers, to express the manner, in which he intended to utter his voice in "the ages to come." The gospel is the voice of God to us, and the Holy Spirit is the wind of the gospel-day. Accordingly the word is said to come, not in word only, but in the Holy Ghost, who gives much assurance, or as a certain token of the presence of God, as the cloud or wind afforded of old. Hereby we know that he abides in us, by the spirit which he has given us. When he came on the apostles, he came in the sound of a rushing mighty wind.

OBSERVATION V.

JOB xxxvii. 22.

Fair weather comes out of the north: with God is terrible majesty.

THAT this text is misrendered, will appear probable by a very little attention to the last clause of the verse. If the first clause

clause be properly translated, Fair Weather comes out of the North; it is impossible to see the connection, between Fair Weather and Terrible Majesty. God is dreadful in the storms, but his benevolence is displayed in the amiableness of the sun-shine, or in fair weather. But the propriety of this reflection, will immediately appear, by looking into the original. The word rendered fair weather, signifies Splendor, Glory, or such a brightness, as always gilded the cloud of the divine presence. And that this was really the object, which gave rise to the striking remarks made by Elihu, in this and the following verses, is certain from the first verse of the next chapter; "The Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said." The whirlwind, or the cloud infolding itself, was evidently the Shechinah. See Ez. i. 4. This cloud was approaching, while Elihu was making his elegant speech, and afforded him a new topic of eloquence. Accordingly, so soon as he saw the approaching Deity, he celebrates his praises in the following apposite manner: "The Shechinah comes out of the north: with God is terrible majesty. Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict. Men do therefore fear him: he respecteth not any that are wise in heart." As he uttered these

these words, Jehovah himself draws nigh, and answers from the cloud of his terrible majesty, as in the following chapters.

It deserves our notice, that when the Shechinah made its occasional appearances, it usually came from the North. Elihu mentions this as an usual circumstance of its approach. The Shechinah comes out of the North. And as a corroborating evidence of the truth of this, when Ezekiel saw this symbol of Deity in vision, he beheld it advancing from the north, chap. i. 4. "I looked, and behold a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it," or such a splendor or golden colour, as Elihu saw on the before-mentioned occasion. As Ezekiel saw in vision the appearance of the Shechinah in the same form, in which it was seen in reality, it is probable he saw it also coming from the same airth, from which it usually made its advances. The Man Christ Jesus is now become our true Shechinah. In him the god-head dwells in all its fullness, and he is invested with that divine splendor which shone in the pillar of the cloud, and fire of old, while the Son appeared in the form of God. We beheld his glory, says John, the glory as of the only begotten of the father: being made flesh he dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. Now Jesus came from Nazareth

zareth of Galilee, a country situated northward from Jerusalem. From hence he came to Jerusalem, in God's great name to save us; that the Jews might see the truth of that ancient figure, the true Shechinah, the brightness of the father's glory, coming out of the north.

We may observe too, that as the cloud of the divine glory came from the north, so, when it left its residence in Jerusalem, it returned to heaven by the east, Ez. xi. 23. It stood upon the mountain, which is on the east side of the city, *i. e.* the mount of Olives. The New Testament also opens up this mystery. When Jesus left Jerusalem, after he had been despised and rejected of men, his feet stood upon the mount of Olives; and as he blessed his disciples, he was parted from them, and was carried up into heaven.

OBSERVATION VI.

NUMB. xix.

And a man that is clean, shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, &c.

THAT the ceremony of burning the red heifer was intended to prefigure the death of the Saviour, is sufficiently confirmed by the authority of the apostle, writing to the Hebrews,

brews, chap. xiii. 11. 12.: and that its attendant circumstances were no less figurative than the sacrifice itself, seems equally clear from the same authority. As the heifer was burnt without the camp, so the apostle assures us, it behoved Jesus to suffer without the gate of the Holy City. The emblematical intention of many such circumstances, have been pointed out by our writers on mystery. The following, however, seem to have escaped their attention. In the verse under consideration, God appoints a man that is clean, to remove the ashes of the burnt heifer, and to lay them up in a clean place, without the camp. The mystical design of these circumstances, is very exactly marked by John the evangelist, chap. xix. 38.—42. Joseph of Arimathea was the clean man, *i. e.* clear from the guilt of shedding innocent blood; nor had Nicodemus consented to the death of Jesus. These took the ashes of the great sacrifice, the body of Jesus, and laid it in a new tomb, wherein no man had been yet laid. As the Jews reckoned every thing defiled, that had been so much as touched by the bones of a dead man, this tomb would be called clean in their dialect, as no corpse had been hitherto laid in it. And that the antitype might fully correspond to the type, the garden, in which this new tomb was, lay without the city, upon Calvary, the scene of
our

our Saviour's crucifixion. Here were these ashes laid up, which still remain as the only "purification for sin," when sprinkled on the conscience in "the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost."

OBSERVATION. VII.

ISA. liii. 9.

And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death.

THE first clause of this verse, seems to be misrendered, as the sense it bears in our version, by no means agrees with the last clause of the verse, nor can it be reconciled with the history of our Saviour's burial, to which event it has an obvious reference. The last clause gives the reason why he made his grave with the wicked, namely, because he had done no violence, neither was guile found in his mouth. This is certainly absurd; since his innocence and integrity, rather furnish a reason for his being buried among the righteous. Accordingly, it was a punishment inflicted upon the wicked kings of Judea, that they were not buried in the sepulchres of the kings of Israel. 2 Chron. xxviii. 27. Whereas here it is said, that he shall have a grave among the wicked, because he is righteous.

eous. Again, the New Testament informs us, that he did not make his grave either with the righteous, or the wicked, as he was buried in a new tomb, where never man had lyen. But consulting the Hebrew, the true translation will appear as follows:

Even the wicked shall give him a grave; and the rich in his death. Reading it thus, it is consistent with the history of the event, and with the last clause of the verse. For Pilate, that *wicked* and tyrannical governor, convinced of our Lord's innocence, gave him a grave, or allowed him to be decently and honourably interred. After which the *rich* Joseph of Arimathea, buried him in his own new tomb. Thus both the wicked and the rich agreed to give him a grave, and that for the reason mentioned in the end of the verse, because they were both convinced, that he had done no violence neither was guile found in his mouth.*

D OBSERVATION

* The Hebrew reader knows, that although *ath* be generally the sign of the accusative, yet it is sometimes prefixed to the nominative; as in Jer. xxxviii. 16. It seems also to be a sign of the nominative in this text. The verb, indeed, is in the singular number, but so is the noun rendered *rich*; and although the noun *rshgnim* be in the plural, yet one person only, even Pilate, is denoted thereby.

OBSERVATION VIII.

ZECHA. i. 8.

I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees, that were in the bottom, and behind him were there red horses, speckled and white.

IT is universally allowed, that the man in the vision, riding upon a red horse, represented the Son of God, the great King of Israel, who is here considered, as refreshing himself and his host, among the myrtle trees, after he had defeated the Babylonians, when he “rode upon his horses and chariots of Salvation.” *Red*, almost in all nations, is an emblem of war, as *White* is of peace. Now, I think, it deserves observation, that this mighty Redeemer, the Son of God, although King of the church in all ages, yet under the law, he is always represented as riding a red horse; whereas, under the gospel, he is said to be mounted on a white horse, and equipped in a manner very different from that, in which he judged and made war among the Israelites. “I saw heaven opened,” says John, Rev. xix. 11. “and behold a white horse, and he that sat upon him was called faithful and true.” &c. see also Rev. vi. 2. There must certainly

ly be a reason for all this ; let us now try to find it out.

During the law dispensation, the Holy One of Israel, presided over the people as a nation. To them he gave laws, statutes, and judgments, and superintended the execution of them in person, distributing rewards and punishments after the manner of Kings, while he resided among them in a palace, which he filled with visible emblems of his presence. As a King, he also took the lead in matters of war and peace ; yea frequently he fought their battles for them, while they stood idle, and amazed spectators. Now, as he was their national King, nothing can be more proper, than to represent him, as in this vision, as riding at the head of their armies, while his hosts follow their leader, in dutiful obedience. " Behind him were red horses," &c. And as the enemies of Israel, in their national character were flesh and blood like themselves, without a miracle, they could only be conquered by carnal weapons, or by such instruments of war, as the nations of the world use in all their hostile enterprizes. In this light it is proper, that their King should be represented, as bearing a sword of steel, or such like weapons of warfare. Accordingly we find him so accoutered, Josh. v. 13. Joshua saw our Lord, with a sword drawn in his hand, and he said, " as Captain of the Lord's host am

I come." It was he who made the swords of the Israelites drunk with the blood of their foes, the Canaanites, and therefore he appears with a sword in his hand. Again, as the land of Canaan was obtained at first, and the possession of it maintained afterwards, by such a series of wars and bloodshed, it was very fit that their King should be represented, as riding a red horse, the emblem of war and destruction. Rev. vi. 4.

But, on the other hand, the gospel is a dispensation of peace. It has brought in a very material, a very important change in the state of things. No more is our Redeemer the national king of any people. No nation, since the destruction of Jerusalem, has got a system of civil laws appointed by God, and separating them from all other nations. He has not taken into his hand, the reins of the government of any particular nation, and as he is not their national legislator, neither does he superintend the execution of their national rewards and punishments. No more is he captain of any nation as such, and so cannot head them in shedding the blood of their enemies. His Israel now is a truly holy people, chosen out of all nations under heaven. In every nation, he that fears God, and works righteousness is accepted of him. Their enemies are not flesh and blood, for flesh and blood cannot hurt them as christians: men can only kill the bo-

dy, and after that can do no more. Hence, as their enemies are of the spiritual kind, the weapons of their warfare are not carnal, like Israel's of old, but spiritual, and mighty only through God.

Now of this holy nation Christ is still the king. But it is evident, that he cannot be such a king as he was to the old Israel. Since now his kingdom is not of this world, its laws, rewards, punishments, armour and wars cannot be of this world either, as these can establish and protect a kingdom of this world, but are not calculated to establish that which is spiritual and heavenly. Accordingly in the New Testament, this King is represented in a dress and armour, suited to the genius of the dispensation. As this nation is saved, by the preaching of the gospel, which proclaims peace and good-will to men, he is figured as riding a white horse, the sign of peace, to shew his people, that his kingdom consists in peace, whereof he is the prince, having spoiled principalities and powers; and to give the nations of the world to know, that neither he nor his subjects will disturb their tranquillity, or shed the blood of any of their people. And as it is by the word and spirit of truth, that this holy nation are subdued to the obedience of faith, and by the same instrument, all their spiritual foes are overcome, their king is represented as having a sword coming out of

his mouth. Rev. xix. 1. &c. He is no more said to have a sword in his hand to slay men as of old, but a sword in his mouth, even the truth of the gospel, whereby he slays their ignorance and vices. By this he smites the nations, and captivates the heart to his obedience. Christians, war not with flesh and blood, but with spiritual wickednesses, and hence their armour is called, the "armour of God," quite distinct from that of flesh and blood. Even the man of sin is not to be destroyed by carnal weapons, but by "the spirit of Christ's mouth," the sharp two-edged sword mentioned Heb. iv. 12. and by the brightness of his coming.

Again, as the subjects of this kingdom should be like their king; so they are said to follow him upon white horses, whereas the armies of old Israel are represented as riding red horses, as he himself did during that dispensation. Some, indeed, are said to be speckled and white; yet these are placed in the rear behind the red horses, to shew that the enemies of Israel could only have peace, by submitting themselves entirely to their yoke. Peace, then, was but the consequence of war and victory. Now, however, the Israel of God are figured as riding only on white horses, to shew that they can only obtain the victory by preaching peace in Jesus Christ, and following peace with all men: or to teach us
this

this great lesson, that although Christ uses men in promoting the spiritual kingdom, yet they must not use carnal weapons in this warfare. They are to war only with the ignorance and the lusts of men, and not with their persons; and they can only have success when they preach Christ crucified, and have their conversation on earth, in simplicity, and godly sincerity. Thus it pleases God to save them that believe. Hence the city or kingdom of Christ is said to be "low in a low place." If. xxxii. 18. 19. As she is not exalted to places of worldly power and grandeur, her officers are not kings, potentates, and rulers of this world, establishing her by civil laws founded on temporal sanctions, and promoting her interests by the force of riches and arms—but are the poor of this world, weak things, and as christians without earthly riches and power, hence she is said to be low in a low place. Never was there a more absurd thought than that of raising the Christian Church to the high places of this world, or of founding her upon the civil and military powers. A church has been thus exalted, but never the church of Christ. It is the church of Antichrist which is built on the seven mountains. The church of Christ ever was, and will be in a low place. Her king, however, is in her, and all the powers of this world cannot hurt her. Even when

when they pour down the hail of their fury upon her, her inhabitants "shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places," the "peace of God which passes all understanding keeping their hearts and minds."

OBSERVATION IX.

REV. XIX. 11. 13. 19.

I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse! and he that sat upon him was called faithful and true, &c. He was clothed with a vesture dipt in blood. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

WHEN the fullness of time came, the Captain of our Salvation changed the red horse of War and mounted the White horse, the presage of peace and benevolence to men. But it may appear strange, that he should be represented as clothed with the garments of blood, even when he appears in all the amiableness of mercy. Isaiah saw him, chap. lxiii. 1. 2. afar off, coming up from his conquests in the gloomy dominions of death and the grave, "red in his apparel," and John in the vision, saw him, even in heaven, "clothed with a vesture dipt in blood," while

while all his attendants are arrayed in white garments. There is surely a propriety in this representation, which may perhaps be illustrated by the following thought.

The blood of the Lamb, or the victory which he obtained on Calvary, is that alone which can animate all the "good soldiers of Christ Jesus." By an unremitting attention to this great event, they are fired with new ardour, "wax valiant in fight, and put to flight the armies of the aliens." They overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and are more than conquerors even when the rage of battle but begins to burn. In this view it is highly proper, that their general should be figured as he came from Calvary, red in his apparel, when he leads on his armies to the war, as thus they have the blood always before them, through faith, in which they can only obtain the victory. Hence, even on the throne, he appears as a Lamb that has been slain; that so his subjects may never forget to what they owe their safety, and at what price they are redeemed from the hand of the enemy. As it is by a fixed belief of this truth, that they resist the assaults of the foe, how happily is their leader represented in the vision, as riding in full view, clothed with a vesture dipt in blood, to remind his followers of the love he displayed for them in staining his raiment with his own blood, and
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that of his foes, that they might gain a glorious victory, being strengthened with all might in the inner man, according to the working of that mighty power, which wrought in Christ, when he spoiled principalities and powers, and triumphed over them on the cross.

But since the Captain comes with dyed garments, why are his followers clothed in white? Would it not be more proper for the servants to be as their master, since they as well as he, overcome by blood? A little attention will shew us the contrary. Christ died for our sins, or had his apparel stained with blood, that through him, we might be made the righteousness of God, or be made righteous and holy, all our iniquities being removed far from us. Now, white is the badge of righteousness, holiness, or purity. Most properly, then, the vision represents the saints as clothed in White, because they obtain the robe of righteousness, through the death of the slain lamb, when they follow him, can they appear more properly, than in the robes which he has purchased for them? By this they declare that their leader has taken their filthy garments from them, and clothed them with change of raiment. If they appeared in red, this would say they had been at the war, and so had their garments rolled in blood: but since our Lord trode the wine-press alone, or slew the foe in single combat,

combat, it is proper that he alone should wear the garment of blood. Since he has washed us from our sins, in his blood, may we follow him now in robes of righteousness, that in the world to come we may be counted worthy to "walk with him in white!"

OBSERVATION X.

ZECH. iii. 8.

Hear now, O Joshua, the high-priest, thou and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at, &c.

AFTER the angel in the vision has protested against Joshua's accuser, he proceeds ver. 7. to intimate the designs of the Judge, to Joshua and his attendants, relative to the sending of the Messiah, the great object of their expectations. These important news are conveyed in the mystical language of prophecy, which makes things present, representations of things to come, and expresses things heavenly and spiritual, by images borrowed from things earthly. Hear now, O Joshua, the high-priest, and not only hear this yourself, but all your fellows also who have accompanied you from Babylon, and now sit before you after the manner of Scholars, and hear the law at your mouth.

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What concerns all, demands universal attention. Hear; for behold! I bring forth my servant the *Branch*, who shall rise like a young shoot from the decayed root of David. But why does the angel say that Joshua and his fellows are men wondered at? The commentators reply, because their neighbours in the nations around them, were surprised to see them building the city and temple of Jerusalem. But this answer seems neither true in fact, nor consistent with the context. We read of their neighbours hating them on this account, and bringing in railing accusations against them; for which reason they are represented in this chapter under the character of Satan, standing at the right hand of Joshua to resist him: but we never read of their wondering at them. And indeed, where was the wonder of their building the temple, when they were armed with all the authority of a royal edict, from the great king of Persia for this purpose? Besides, it gives very little meaning to the angel's speech. Hear this concerning the incarnation of the Messiah, for ye are men wondered at! What connexion is there between their being wondered at, and the incarnation of Jesus?

But if we look into the original text, we will find it reads thus, "these men are signs." Now the intention of a sign is, to represent something distinct from itself, either past, present

sent, or to come, and frequently has the same sense with the word *type*. Not only things, but men and their actions are considered in scripture as signs or types. This is clear from a passage in Ezekiel's prophecies, chap. xii. 1.—12. God commanded him to go and remove the furniture of his house from Jerusalem, in the sight of all the people, and then to say to Israel, "I am your sign," that is, as I have done, so shall it be done unto you. Here it is obvious that Ezekiel is considered as a type or figure of the Jews; the spoiling of his house is a representation of the spoiling of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, &c. Thus both Ezekiel and his actions are signs or emblems to Israel.

In this light the words are plain. Hear now, O Joshua, and your fellows, because ye are types or signs of my servant, the Branch and his attendants, and your present actions, are emblematical of his future glorious deeds. As I have brought forth Joshua, to build my temple at this time, so will I bring forth my servant the Branch, who shall build me a temple, far more magnificent, and shall bear the glory. And as ye, the followers of Joshua, sit before him in the humble attitude of disciples, that ye may receive instruction from him, so when my great servant appears, his Disciples, shall sit at his feet and hear his words, and be all

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taught of God. Thus "you men are signs." Again, as the foundation-stone of the temple is laid in the presence of Joshua, ver. 9. with seven eyes engraven upon it, so my servant Jesus shall lay the foundation of the spiritual temple in himself, his actions and doctrines, and I will carve the carvings, or engrave the engraved work thereof, when it shall please me to bruise him, and to put him to grief. Thus your actions are signs also.

Seven eyes are said to be engraven on Christ our foundation-stone, with allusion to the stones of the temple of old, which were engraven with carved cherubims, full of eyes round about, 1 Kings, vi. 29. Now, eyes in the mystic sense, denote prudence, wisdom, foresight, &c. as is plain from Solomon's words, "a wise man's eyes are in his head;" he looks before him, sees the events and issues of things, and conducts himself with prudence and discretion. Christ is the wisdom of God, and he is endued with the spirit of knowledge, wisdom and understanding. In him wisdom has opened up her many folds, and the spiritual house of his building is called the house of wisdom, Prov. ix. 1. The eyes of the Lord then are said to be in Christ, as the whole plan of the eternal councils is connected with and opened up in him. In him it was laid, and in him and by him it is carried into execution, as he is the immediate administrator

nistrator of the divine government through the whole creation.

As the engraver strikes and wounds the stone, that the intended figures may rise in sculpture; so says God, I will engrave the gravings of this stone, which I lay in Zion. When Christ was laid as the foundation of the spiritual temple, he was wounded for our transgressions, stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. And that this prophecy was accomplished at the death of Christ, is plain from the following clause, "I will remove the iniquity of that land in a day." The removal of our iniquity is here connected with God's engraving this stone, whence it is clear, that the engraving in the verse, must have been finished in the death and resurrection of Jesus, as it is in consequence of this alone, that God is just in justifying the ungodly. We are justified only by the blood of Jesus, and through this man is preached to us the forgiveness of sins.

OBSERVATION XI.

On the Phrase, *The root of the matter.*

JOB xix. 28.

THIS phrase is peculiar to the verse cited, and at first view it may appear difficult to

ascertain its meaning. It is generally thought that Job hereby intends to express his innocence and integrity. But, I think, two objections may be brought against this sense: he is not properly vindicating his innocence in this chapter, and if he had, it is not easy to see, how his friends could infer, from any thing said in this chapter, that he is innocent or upright; whereas, in this verse, he shews them the absurdity of persecuting him, because they might see, from what he had just now said, that the root of the matter was in him.

But, if we translate the clause thus, For the root of the word is in me, then we may find it intelligible. The Hebrew word rendered matter, properly and originally signifies word, and such a word, as conceals a secret or mystery in it. Now, if it be asked, what Job means by the word, and the root of the word? I shall answer as follows:

It seems obvious, that *dabar* the word denoted prophecy, and in the early ages was used only in that sense, when used abstractly. When prophecy came to the holy men of old, it is said, The word of God, and sometimes, The word came, &c. as in Amos, i. 1. With allusion to this ancient custom, Peter calls prophecy the word, 2 Ep. i. 19. Prophecy was a revelation of the will of God, and so is most fitly called the word, as words are the means of

of conveying or revealing the sentiments of the heart among man.

That we may know what is meant by the root of the word, we must consider, that the very design of prophecy at first, was to lay a foundation for the hopes of mankind, or to raise their expectations of future good, and chiefly of deliverance from the consequences of the fall. The first prophecy, Gen. iii. 15. was obviously intended to raise the hopes of redemption by a mighty saviour, called in the prophetic style, the Seed of the Woman. Now, from verses 25. 26. and 27. of this chapter, Job's friends might have easily learned, that the same hope of deliverance thro' the promised Goel or redeemer was in him, or that the knowledge of the kind designs of grace, and its attendant hopes, had taken such a fast hold of his soul, that he could not but, in his moments of reflection, rejoice even in the view of death and the grave, and of all the horrors which attend the dissolution of nature.

The word is said to take root, Matt. xiii. 18—24. when it influences the heart and the life of a man. The word of prophecy must then take root in a man, when it has proper influence upon him, *i. e.* when it awakens his hopes of deliverance, which was the original intention of prophecy. In this view, the root of the word was found in Job, as he

declares, that his hope, founded upon the life and power of his redeemer, was his alone support, in the day of his affliction. In this view, too, this verse is clearly connected with the foregoing. It is in vain for you now, as if Job had said, to persecute me, for you may see from what I have said, that the revelation which God has given me of a future deliverance, supports me amid all the calumnies with which you load me.

The first prophecy is indeed the root of all the word of God. The whole bible is but a clearer explication of the original promise; and when we have got this hope of eternal deliverance in us, then the root of the word is found in us; the root, which sends forth such vigorous shoots, and fills us with all the fruits of righteousness; the root of all our joy and consolation. We can only be vigorous in religion, when we look not at the things that are seen, but at the things which are not seen. It is only the hope of eternal redemption, that fills us with joy and peace in believing.

OBSERVATION XII.

On the Phrase, *Son of Perdition.*

THIS epithet is only applied to two persons in scripture, Judas and Antichrist.

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To the former in John, xvii. 12. and to the latter in 2 Theff. ii. 3. As this epithet is given to both by the inspired penman, we may be sure, that it is characteristical of their spirit, and must be founded upon some circumstances of resemblance, between the two characters. I think the analogy may be traced as follows:

1st. Both have appeared in the church of Christ, and have opposed him in his own kingdom, under a specious profession of zeal for his cause. Judas was one of his disciples, a devil among the twelve apostles. Antichrist, too, has not opposed christianity in the form of an heathen, or as an avowed enemy: on the contrary, he has professed himself a most zealous friend, assuming the splendid titles of Christ's vicar and substitute upon earth, while he secretly betrays his best interests. So Paul foretold, that this man of sin would sit in the temple of God, not in a heathen temple, exalting himself above all that is called God, in claiming a power to dispose of the kingdoms of this world, and to destroy the bodies of his adversaries—Powers which the Saviour never assumed.

2d. Their spirit and temper are remarkably similar. Judas was induced to betray his master, by love to this world. The love of money was the root of this evil. So the spirit of Antichrist is a worldly persecuting spirit,

rit, and wherever these dispositions appear, there is Antichrist. Hence John says, there are many Antichrists, because this ambition for riches, honours, and preferments in this world, attended with a proud, domineering and persecuting temper, has prevailed among many sects of Christians; although it has displayed itself in its most infernal colours in the person of the Pope. Accordingly, Babylon, the city of Antichrist, is represented, Rev. xviii. as the mart of nations, amassing the riches of all kingdoms, and making merchandise of the very souls of men; while at the same time she is drunk with the blood of the Saints, and of the martyrs of Jesus, in her being found the blood of Prophets, and of Saints, and of all that are slain on the earth.

3d. Judas employed the civil powers in persecuting his master. He betrayed him to the chief priests and rulers of the Jews. The same instruments have been employed by the man of sin, in all the persecutions which he has raised against the members and doctrines of Christ. It has ever been a fundamental article in the antichristian creed, That heretics, or such as refuse to acknowledge subjection to human authority, in matters of religion, should be delivered over to the secular arm to be punished, and that the civil magistrate, ought to employ his power, for the
extirpation

extirpation of such. This is precisely what John has foretold, Rev. xvii. 13, 14, 17, 18. The ten kings shall give their power and strength to the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb. For God hath put in their hearts to give their kingdom to the beast, &c. The event has verified the prophecy both in the Roman Antichrist, and in various other national churches, whose principles in this respect have been entirely the same.

4th. Judas lost his ill-gotten gain, and then came to an untimely end. Such shall be the fate of Antichrist in the issue. The kings of the earth shall withdraw their support both of power and wealth, which they have so long afforded him, and then he shall come to his end, and none shall help him. This is clearly foretold in Rev. xvii. 16. These shall hate the whore, and make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. See also, Rev. xviii. 8. 2 Theff. ii. 8.

Antichrist, then, as well as Judas, is called the son of perdition or destruction, because he is the son of the destroyer. Satan breathes a destroying spirit, or takes pleasure in the destruction of mankind, and shall at last be destroyed himself by the brightness of Christ's coming, or as John expresses it, he goeth into perdition. The Lamb shall overcome; and it demands our gratitude, that almost every
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where that tyrannical and persecuting spirit, is gradually consuming, by the spirit of the Saviour's mouth, or by the spirit of truth, love and liberty. This love of the truth is the sword which shall slay, and the fire which shall burn the flesh of the whore.

OBSERVATION XIII.

PSALM lxxx. 17.

Let thy hand be still upon the man of thy right hand, &c.

TH^{O'} the phrase, *man of thy right hand*, may have an immediate reference to the king, who ruled in Judah, when this psalm was penned, it must ultimately and most properly intend Jesus Christ, the great antitype of all the kings of David's line. The New Testament is the best interpreter of the old; and it assures us, that this highly dignified man, is the Son of God, Heb. i. 1, 3, 13.

But if we would understand the genuine import of the phrase, we must attend to a custom, which obtained in Judea and other eastern countries. At meals, the master of the feast placed the person whom he loved best on his right hand, as a token of love and respect; and as they sat on couches, in the intervals between the dishes, when the
master

master leaned on his left elbow, the man at his right hand, leaning also on his, would naturally repose his head on the master's bosom, while at the same time the master laid his right hand on the favourite's shoulder or side, in testimony of his favourable regards. This custom is obviously referred to in John xxi. 20. where John is called "the disciple whom Jesus loved, who also leaned on his breast at supper." Now, since Christ is called the man of God's right hand, this says that he is the object of his warmest and most honourable regards. In him he is well pleased, and in token of this, he has set him in the most honourable place. He is the Son of Man whom the father made to stand strong for himself, *i. e.* to support the honour and dignity of the divine character, amidst a perverse and crooked generation. The consideration of the father's right hand being upon him, or of the father's satisfaction in him as our surety, serves to animate and embolden our addresses to this throne, and is the keenest incitement to put in practice that resolution, *Henceforth will we not go back from thee.*

It deserves observation, that our Saviour is said to sit on the father's right hand, and John the beloved disciple on the right hand of the Saviour. Each of the eleven apostles had his particular gift. Peter was most remarkable,

markable, in that he was the first to confess his master's divinity, and the most warm in his professions of zeal for his interest. Jesus loved them all, and called them friends and brethren; yet he admitted none to sit on his right hand at meals but John alone. John was distinguished for his love, meekness and moderation; and consequently his exaltation teaches us this important truth: The loving christian is the beloved disciple, or that he who loves most has the largest share in the Saviour's heart. Love, of all other perfections, assimilates us the most to the divine nature. "God is love; and he that loveth not knoweth not God."

OBSERVATION XIV.

ZECH. iv. 7, 10.

What art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain. For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with these seven: they are the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth.

THE great mountain before Zerubbabel, must mean some vast difficulty, which embarrassed him in building the temple. This difficulty

difficulty is easily known. The corrupt Samaritans addressed the king of Persia, that he might by a royal edict, prohibit the rebuilding of that sacred edifice, after its foundation had been laid. Thus ceased the work. This mountain, however, became a plain, by God's turning the heart of Darius to favour that righteous undertaking. All this was a type of what was to happen, during the building of the gospel temple, under the direction of the Messiah, the true Zerubbabel, who brings back strangers to God, as the word means. His hands laid the foundation of this spiritual house, and all true christians, the lively stones, are built upon this foundation. It had advanced, however, but a very short way, when the man of sin appeared, and employed his corrupt church-men, to petition the state-powers, to establish them in the revenues and dignities of this world, and to lend them their secular assistance, in destroying heretics. This dreadful combination of powers, turned their arms against Jesus, and as to all that was visible, the glorious work of building this last, best temple, ceased for several centuries. Thus as the Persian monarch gave his power to the corrupt Samaritan church, till mount Gerizzim seemed to over-top mount Zion, so the kings of the earth, gave their power to the church of Rome, that sits on the seven mountains ;

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and thus combined, they formed the monstrous beast, which like a great mountain, has opposed the progress of the spiritual building. Thus, mount Gerizzim first, and then mount Rome, has stood before Zerubbabel. But as the former was levelled by God, inclining the heart of the Persian king to withdraw his aid from the corrupt church-men, and to give orders for finishing the house of God, so this Antichrist will be destroyed, and is so far consumed already, by the disjunction of the civil from the ecclesiastical authority: which gives us reason to think, that the building of God will soon be finished.

Ezra tells us, that many of the old priests, and chiefs, who had seen the first temple, wept when they saw the foundation of the second, and hence are said to despise the day of small things, verse 10. But, says God, you who have despised these beginnings, seemingly inauspicious, shall see that your fears were groundless; "for ye shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel." There is plainly a difficulty in this verse. How could they rejoice when they saw the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel? They had seen him begin the work formerly, and yet they saw it stopt. Might they not fear, lest the same disagreeable event might happen again, as their enemies were as inveterate, in their resentments, as ever? Again,
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the seven eyes or cherubim, are said to be engraven on this instrument in the hand of their ruler; for they are said to see the plummet with the seven, that is, seven eyes, chap. iii. 9. Now, how could these be engraven on a plummet, or on that instrument of masonry so called? But this difficulty will vanish if we look into the original text. The word rendered plummet, plainly means *the stone of distinction*, or the distinguished stone. Now there were two stones most remarkable, or distinguished from all the other stones of the temple, even the foundation and head, or cape-stones, See ver. 7. of this chapter, and Isaiah, xxviii. 16. The Jews had already seen the foundation-stone in their ruler's hand, when he laid it in their presence, ver. 9. The stone of distinction, which they were now about to see, in the hands of Zerubbabel, and to see with so great joy, must then surely have been the head-stone. This being the finishing-stone of the temple, would no doubt be remarkable, and when they saw this in the hands of this great personage, Ezra informs us, they rejoiced greatly, chap. vi. 16. Besides, this sense of the text is confirmed by the seventh verse of this chapter, where it is expressly said, that Zerubbabel "shall bring forth the head-stone of the temple with shoutings, or acclamations of joy, crying *grace, grace to it.*"

This stone is said to have seven eyes engraven on it. By these the figures of cherubims seem to be meant, which are said to be full of eyes. These seven were engraven upon the foundation-stone, and upon all the walls of the house, 1 Kings, vi. 29. Whence it would not have been proper, to have left the highest stone of distinction unadorned. The seven eyes on the head-stone have this peculiar characteristic, that they are the eyes of Jehovah, which run to and fro through the whole earth. As the cherubims were engraven on every side of this stone, and the stone was elevated above all the other parts of the building, they would look towards the four quarters of the earth, or run to and fro through the whole of it.

All this was a figure. As every stone in the wall of the house of God of old, was carved with cherubims, so the wall of the spiritual temple, is formed of believers, the mystic cherubims, who are hence said to be lively stones built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself, being the chief-corner-stone. The eye in scripture is the figure of wisdom; and as the wisdom of God is eminently displayed in the church of believers, to represent this, the eyes were carved on all the wall of the temple. And as Jesus Christ, is the most perfect expression of divine wisdom, whence he is called

called "Christ the wisdom of God," seven eyes were engraven on the foundation and head-stones, to express this perfection of wisdom in him. The head-stone, too, having eyes looking to the four quarters of the earth, happily represented him, as the Saviour of all the lands of the earth, who has revealed the plan of saving wisdom to all nations, and, like the head-stone, looking with a benign aspect to all, he cries, Look to me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth.

OBSERVATION XV.

HEB. iv. 16.

Let us come boldly to the throne of Grace, &c.

THE Word here rendered *boldly*, signifies with freedom of speech. It is intended to display the superiority of the gospel dispensation above that of the law. While that first covenant stood, such as drew nigh to God approached rather in the terror of slaves than the confidence of sons. When Moses was called to go up to the mount to converse with God, such were the displays of divine majesty and greatness in thunders, lightnings and tempests, that even Moses himself exceedingly quaked and trembled. And when the high-priest on the day of atonement en-

tered the most holy place to perform the duty of his sacred office, he could not approach the presence of so august and tremendous a Being without dread and consternation. Now, fear has a tendency to discompose the thoughts, to shut up the heart, and to make the tongue falter in performing its office. Hence, Israel, worshipping in the spirit of fear and servile dread, could not draw near with freedom of speech. But now, God is made manifest in the flesh, or in human nature, a nature, at the same time most amiable, and most familiar to men, he no more appears in terrors and affrightments, which made even Sinai shake at its base, and damped the spirits, and hampered the tongues of the chosen people. We, now, may come, even to his throne, and present our addresses with a recollected spirit and an unfaltering tongue. "God has not given us the spirit of fear, or the spirit of bondage again to fear, but he has given us the spirit of love and of a sound mind—the spirit of sons whereby we cry Abba, Father."

This timid spirit and hampered speech was the native effect of the Law. It made nothing perfect. It gave no distinct knowledge of the method of salvation from sin, or of the foundation of a sinner's acceptance with God, and so did not clearly reveal the ground of our assurance before him. We have only

ly boldness to enter into the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus. This blood alone has rent the veil which concealed the gospel-salvation, and made our access to the throne of grace plain and certain. The way to the holiest of all was not manifest while the first tabernacle stood, because the blood of bulls and goats could never in itself pave a sinner's way to the presence of God, or manifest the foundation of his confidence before him for eternal life. Sin is the veil which hangs between God and us. This veil is taken away in Christ, in whom the father smiles upon us in the light of reconciliation, having blotted out all our trespasses. Now our way is open, and the foundation of our hope sure. Hence "we draw nigh with true bold hearts, in the full assurance of faith."

The Law in its letter, abstracted from its typical intention, was rather designed to strike men dumb than to open their mouths with confidence in their religious addresses to God. This is the office assigned to it by Paul. What the Law saith, it saith to them that are under it, that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world become guilty before God. The daily repetition of sacrifices served to display the criminality of our offence; but, as the law knew no sufficient atonement, it could not pronounce these who observed its dictates justified, with freedom of speech.

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Here its mouth was stopped; and as timidity is the ordinary companion of guilt, the offerer seeing his guilt, without any proper atonement, could not plead for a full justification in the full assurance of faith. Hence every mouth was stopped till Jesus opened it; who, making an end of sin, has banished the spirit of fear, and so has loosed the tongue of the dumb, and made the stammerer to speak plainly. The gospel puts a plea into every mouth, a plea founded on the sacrifice of everlasting efficacy, that every mouth may be opened, and the whole world stand justified before God.

There seems to have been a mystical indication of this truth both at the commencement, and towards the end of the Law-æconomy. Moses was appointed by God to deliver the law to Israel; and he was a man defective in speech, on account of which defect he excused himself from delivering God's message to Pharaoh, *Exod. iv. 10*. And when John Baptist was about to appear to proclaim the commencement of the gospel dispensation, the new and the better covenant, God struck the priest of the law dumb, even in the temple itself, and that at the very time, when he should have come out to pronounce a blessing on the people, *Luke i. 20, 21, 22*. Thus the law, both at its entrance and exit, declared that it could not bless or justify us
with

with freedom of speech. When Christ our high-priest was about to bless us, it was proper that the law-priest should have his mouth shut when he would pronounce the blessing, to shew that the law had lost its power to bless, and that all might attend to the blessing voice of him who was about to bless us, not with an hampered tongue, but with great plainness of speech; not with a few trivial blessings, but with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places.

It deserves notice, also, that while our Saviour was minister of the circumcision, or during the time of his public ministry, he spake in the law-style, in parables, allegories and metaphors, the dark sayings of old, or belonging to the old dispensation. He did not reveal the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven plainly, but to his disciples: to others he spake in parables. Hence in Isaiah xxviii. 9. he is said to teach babes knowledge, and to make such as are weaned from the milk understand doctrine; whereas ver. 11. he is represented as speaking to the Rabbies of the Jews, and their followers, with a stammering or fluttering speech, meaning the parabolic method of instruction. "For with stammering lips and another tongue will I speak to this people." It is only the hope of the gospel that affords such distinct ideas as fit us for using great plainness of speech."

OBSERVATION

OBSERVATION XVI.

JOHN xiv. 13.

I will come again and receive you unto myself.

THE tenderness of this expression is beyond all description. It is the language of a divine friendship. Our best friend had but a little before eat the supper with his disciples, the feast which is the instituted token of friendship between Christ and his people to the end of the world. On this warm occasion he makes the speech contained in this and the two following chapters, in which his heart gives full scope to the emotions of love, while his mouth utters in the warmest expressions, the feelings of the heart, "I have called you friends, and the thought of parting with you would give me unutterable pain, did I not know that it is expedient for you that I go away. This, however, is the will of my father, the plan of the eternal councils, and the day of my departure is at hand. But absence shall not quench the ardor of my love for you: all the honours, all the joys of heaven shall never so far engross my attention as to make me forget you for a moment. I go to prepare a place for you. It shall be my chief business in heaven to pre-
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pare for you a place of distinguished honour and unabating joy. And when all things are prepared for your reception, I will come again in person, and receive you, not into my house only, but into myself, into the highest place of my esteem, and the warmest corner of my heart." This is truly the language of a friend. Had he said, I will receive you into my dwelling, this would have been but the cold unanimated language of a master to a servant. A servant is admitted to his master's house to perform his service, and eat of his bread; but a friend alone is admitted to his chamber, to enjoy his most intimate familiarities, and to partake of his delicacies, honours, wealth and joys. This expression, then, includes all the peculiar favours of friendship, and more than words can utter. I will make you a part of myself; the flames of mutual love shall melt our souls into one, ye shall share of my joys, be admitted to all my familiarities, and all my fullness shall be yours.

But to see this passage in its full light, it will be necessary, to attend to an opinion, which prevailed among the Jews. They imagined, that when any of their nation died, and entered the regions of bliss, he would be received at the entrance by Abraham, their great father, who would welcome him in, and admit him to his friendship, and the participation

participation of his felicities. Hence our Lord in the parable, represents Lazarus the beggar, as admitted, at death, into Abraham's bosom. Abraham, the father of the faithful, was the greatest man in paradise, before the ascension of Christ, and hence, departing Saints, previous to that time, considered it as their greatest honour, to be admitted into the bosom of that distinguished father, or to be owned as his sons and friends, by being allowed to sit down with him at the table of bliss. But now, says Jesus, the state of things shall be changed. When I ascend to heaven, I will be exalted above Abraham, nor will I employ him, eminent as he is, to receive you into my house; I will perform the pleasing task myself: nor shall you be any more received into the bosom of Abraham, but into the warmer bosom of him, who loved you and died for you.

This is a distinguishing privilege of the gospel, to which christians too seldom attend. When Saints under the law, looked into paradise, they could see no man greater than Abraham, and so no man, on whose affection for them, or in whose interest at the court of heaven, they could so far depend, as to be assured, that his love would dispose him, to plead their cause with God, or that his interest or merit, would prevail with their king, to pardon the offences of his rebellious subjects.

Subjects. What evidence of friendship, for his nation, had Abraham given; or what merit was he possessed of, which could give weight to his intercessions, with the most Holy, in behalf of the guilty? But now, our hopes are surer, our confidence bolder, and our joys warmer. We see Jesus on the throne, of whose kind dispositions toward us, we have the most certain pledges; and of whose merit, and consequently of whose interest, with the Father, we can have no reasonable doubt. Hence we can not only pray, but die in transport. We can depart in peace, when our eyes see the bosom of Jesus open, ready to receive us into all its love, and all its joys.

OBSERVATION XVII.

JOHN, XV. 12.

This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.

THIS command displays the majesty of the legislator, softened by the kindness of the friend. The Lord of all speaks: but he speaks not in the thunders of Sinai, but in the mildness of Zion; not in the roar of fury, but with the soft voice of love. When he appeared on Sinai, "out of his right hand there issued a fiery law for Israel," but when

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he utters his voice from Zion, there is no fire in his law, but the fire of love. This law was in his heart, and this is the law that issues from his tongue. He calls love his commandment for the following reasons:

To shew the distinguishing characteristic of his system, from every other system of laws that had ever been promulgated to the world. Legislators of this world, form their laws for the regulation of the external conduct of their subjects, but to pretend to set laws to their minds, would be an absurd and ridiculous attempt. Actions alone can be a subject of cognizance in human courts. No human law can reach the heart, and subjects frequently obey a law, which their hearts abhor. Hence their obedience is rather the extorted compliance of slaves, than the chearful obedience of sons. But, the system of Jesus is quite different. It first makes laws for the heart, the principle of all our actions, and hence it easily governs the whole. The King of Zion first writes his law in the heart, and engraves it in our inward part, in the love of our soul, the wheel which animates the whole man, and is the alone spring of a noble and generous obedience. This is a law which manifests the divinity of its author. Man judges by the outward appearance, but God alone knows the heart, and so he alone can make regulations for its motion. The laws of o-
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ther monarchs may be those of a sage, but the laws of Jesus, are those of a God. He spake as never man spake: he spake as one having authority, not only over the life, but over the heart. No king ever made love the law of his kingdom before. Hence says Jesus, This is *my* commandment, a law peculiar to my system.

Moreover, this law displays his peculiar knowledge of human nature, and the distinguished benevolence of his heart. Grandeur and majesty may dazzle mankind, and awe them into subjection; but an obedience, which is the result of fear, will be precarious at best, as it has no fixed principle in the heart. The obedience of friendship is the most generous, ready and extensive. A man will do more for his friend than for his king: he will sacrifice his dearest interests, even life itself, and that with cheerfulness, for the object of his affection, while awe or interest are the servile, the interested motives of his service to his prince as such. Hence Jesus addresses us rather in the sweetness of the friend, than in the majesty of the monarch. He aims at our affections, and attracts us to himself, by the words and actions of love; which evidences his intimate knowledge of the human heart. No obedience but that of love is easy, free, and unconstrained, and nothing but love begets love. Accordingly he has made

the whole of his conduct, a display of the most astonishing effects of love to us, nor does he command us to love him; till he has caused us to know and believe the love that he has to us. Hence his yoke is easy, and his burden light; for nothing is more easy and light than the service of love. Another king would say, obey me, because I am your king; but Jesus says obey me, because I am your friend, or because I have loved you.

And thus his command, is a portrait of himself, and manifests the kindness of his heart. The laws of a king generally favour of his own dispositions towards his subjects. In his commands he either discovers the tyrant or the friend. Now, nothing is so conducive to the happiness of society as mutual love. This principle is the cement of society: it unites the views and interests of all its members, so that the general interest of the body is considered as the interest of each individual. It banishes envy, malevolence, slander and every hurtful passion, and is the source of peace, concord and every social blessing. If we love one another, we cannot hurt but serve one another. How kind is it then in our king, to enjoin this law with so much warmth! a law which only means "be happy."

From this consideration we may easily see, that no man can be a subject of Christ's kingdom,

dom, unless he has felt the power of his love. People may imagine that they obey Christ, if they subject themselves in profession to some external services of his religion. But no fancy can be more absurd. Love is the fundamental law of his kingdom, and whatever we do, if we do it not in love, we do it not to him. Love is the spirit which he breathes into every member of his kingdom, and if any man have not this spirit, he is none of his. He that loves not, knows not God, for God is love : and how shall we obey him, whom we have not known?

2d. This is called his commandment, because it is the sum of his whole system, and the model of all his other laws. As all the parts of a building, are conformed to the foundation, so are all the laws of Jesus to love. Let your words be love, and your actions love ; let love animate your religious services, and regulate all your mutual intercourse with one another ; this is the meaning or spirit of the whole law. Hence says Paul, The end of the commandment, the evangelical commandment is charity, out of a pure heart. And as this is the end of the commandment, so all the means appointed for obtaining this end, are obviously the institutions of love. Social prayer and praise, as also, eating the supper of our Lord, presuppose harmony among the worshippers, and are most happily

happily calculated to confirm the sacred tie, or to edify the body in love. In each of these acts we are taught to consider ourselves as having been once brethren in iniquity, and joint heirs of hell, but now brethren in grace, and joint heirs with Christ, having one father, one Lord, one faith, and one common hope of salvation founded upon the finished righteousness of him, who loved us, and died for us. Thus, love is the principle and the end of all the laws and institutions of Jesus. Well then may he say, This is my commandment, as if he had no other. The whole is comprehended in one word, Love.

3d. He seems to have called this his commandment to shew us the badge of his disciples, or to intimate that obedience to this law is the characteristic of the subjects of his kingdom. Every leader of a sect both among the Jews and heathens had appointed some rite or speculative opinion, the belief of or obedience to which, was the badge of distinction among his followers, by which they were known to be his disciples. Thus the Pharisees, Sadducees, Platonists, Epicureans, &c. were distinguished from each other. Each had his leading principle, his favourite opinion, to which he was warmly attached, and by which his party was easily known. With allusion to this custom the Saviour of the world, the head of the heavenly sect, informs

forms his followers, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another;" not as the world loves, but "as I have loved you." Love has been the distinguishing feature in my character. None has loved like me, and if you would resemble your Master, or bear his characteristical mark, you must love as I have loved. This is a badge unknown to all other parties, as they all value themselves on some trifling differences of opinion, while very little regard is paid to the sentiments of the heart. But we have not the very faith of Jesus, or we do not believe his doctrines, if we love him not, and the brethren for his sake. His faith works by love, and that by its native tendency; for what are we called to believe but the love that God has to us. The Christian creed is a creed of love. When we believe in eternal election, the incarnation sufferings, death and resurrection, &c. of the Saviour; or when we believe the promises of endless life and joy which he has left us, what do we believe but the displays of divine love to men? Thus all the articles of our faith are calculated to inspire us with this sacred flame, and it is impossible seriously to believe the love of God manifested in his Son, and not love him and all the objects of such divine regards. Who can look to Calvary, and not feel his heart burn within him?

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But it may be objected, that however much this law of love may distinguish the christian system from those of human legislators, and founders of religious sects, yet it is not herein superior to the law of Moses, which charged every one under it to love his neighbour as himself. This is a very common mistake, but extremely absurd. It would make our Saviour's words to have no meaning at all. He expressly says "A new command I give unto you," yet, according to this opinion, it is as old as the law of Moses. But if we attend to the injunction, and compare it with that of Moses, we shall find them very different both in their objects and model. The love required by Moses regarded mankind as such, and so is the same with what is called universal benevolence, which disposes us to do good to all men; for in this extensive signification, the word neighbour is taken by our Lord in the parable of the man who fell among thieves, Luke x. Or if we understand it in the Jewish sense, as meaning their own nation only, then it requires the Jews to love one another considered as the progeny of Abraham according to the flesh; and thus it is a love founded upon their joint relation to one common earthly father. This new commandment, on the contrary, enjoins a new kind of love unknown to the world before. It commands Christians to love one another

another considered as brethren in Christ. It is only given to his disciples to regulate their sentiments and conduct to one another, not considered as men, nor as children of one earthly father, but as children of the heavenly father, formed upon his image as expressed in his Son Jesus, by whose power they are begotten again to the hope of the celestial inheritance. This is called often brotherly love, and is uniformly enjoined upon Christians only. The love of Moses may be termed a fruit of nature, as it is founded on natural considerations, and is enjoined upon mankind as the joint offspring of an earthly progenitor; but the love of Jesus is the fruit of the spirit, by whose influence alone it is produced in the heart; and it extends its kind regards to men considered in a new character, as the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. Thus it has a new source, is of a new nature, and its object is new. Let us now add, that

The standard or model of this love is entirely new, and so different from that established by the law of Moses. The law knew no warmer love than that which a man has for himself; and consequently it could assign no higher or more perfect model for social affection. Therefore, says Moses, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." How cold, how unanimated is this injunction, when

when compared with the command of him that loved us! "Love one another *as* I have loved you." Kind Jesus! how didst thou love us?—He loved us better than himself, for he gave himself for us, and loved not his own life, when the preservation of it came in competition with our happiness. Is this old Moses' love? A Man loves himself when he uses every lawful means to preserve his own life; and he loves his neighbour as himself when he "works no ill to his neighbour," and performs such kind offices to him as consist with his own life and temporal felicity. But Jesus "became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich;" and sacrificed his own life that we might live through him. This is a new species of love. Greater love has no man than that he should lay down his life for his friend's; but while we were yet enemies, Christ died for us. This new kind of love is now the established standard of our love both to Christ and his brethren. If we love our own life better than him, or are not ready to sacrifice it for his interest, we are not worthy of him; and John tells us that if God so loved us, "we ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren." When we cheerfully resign our life in the christian cause, we die for the benefit of our brethren, and this tends to confirm their faith in the gospel, to animate their efforts in its support,

support, and to encourage them to an unremitting perseverance in adhering to a cause, on which their everlasting interests depend. Hence Paul says, Philip. ii. 17. "Yea, and if I be offered up upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all." He rejoiced in the view of death itself, as he knew it would issue in the service of their faith. This is truly to love our neighbour better than ourselves. The law-history affords no parallel instance of brotherly love. So true is it that the law made nothing perfect. To bring love to its highest perfection, was reserved to set off the superior lustre of the christian dispensation, and to display the distinguished honours of the Son of God. It was left for him to blow up the smoking embers of Moses into the most ardent, the most uncontrollable flame. The love of Moses was the love of Man, but the love of Jesus is that of God.

This peculiar love to the brethren, which our Lord so warmly enjoins, by no means interferes with that love to all mankind, which is recommended in the second great commandment, according to our Saviour's explanation of it. This law is not abolished, but enlarged and explained; yea, it has received additional force by coming from the mouth of the great Lord of all, the mediator of the new covenant. Still we are obliged, and that

that by the most weighty authority, 'by God speaking in his Son, to love all mankind, to as to pray for all men, that all may be saved, to speak evil of no man, and to do good offices to all so far as we have opportunity. We are even commanded to love our enemies, to bless them, and to pray for them even while they curse and maltreat us. So benign an influence has christianity on society! So concerned was Jesus to promote universal happiness, by binding men of all nations together with the cords of universal benevolence!

Some may object to the opinion of the newness of this commandment of brotherly love, that John in his first epistle, 2d chapter and 7th verse, says, that he writes "no new commandment, but an old commandment," when he charges them to love one another. But how old is this commandment? Is it as old as the law of Moses? The answer is given in the same verse, "An old commandment which ye had from the beginning, even the word which ye heard from the beginning." It is the word which was delivered by Christ and all his apostles at the very commencement of the gospel dispensation, and was no new invention of John, as they had heard it as soon as they heard the gospel. Thus by calling it an old commandment, he puts them in mind of its divine authority and vast importance, as it was enjoined from the
very

very beginning, by the mouth of the Lord himself.

OBSERVATION XVIII.

JUDGES, xiv. 14.

—Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness.

SAMPSON was raised up to be a type of Christ, in whom all the rays of excellence diffused through the various characters of the Old Testament heroes, concenter, and shine forth with tenfold effulgence. As in all the exploits of his strength Sampson was a figure of Christ, so I think he was no less so in the riddle he put forth at his wedding. Out of the Lion which he slew with his own hands, he brought forth honey to regale himself and friends. This was equally a mystery to his friends and enemies till it was disclosed by his wife. In like manner, the great mystery of godliness which puzzled the minds of the disciples, and of all the Jews, was the idea of salvation proceeding from death. A Saviour dying to conquer, seemed not only a new but an unintelligible thing in the earth. Death, like the Lion, had long been the terror of mankind. He had devoured all generations from Adam to that day, in which

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Christ

Christ came in the character of a bridegroom to this lower world : and so strong was he, that no man had been able to rescue himself from the power of the grave. The grave, death's prodigious maw, had swallowed thousands at a meal ; and hitherto every thought of death, every view of the opening tomb had filled men with alarming apprehensions. This Lion roared against Jesus when he met him at the gardens of Calvary, the place where all the figures of the law were fulfilled. By dying, our Lord overcame death, and him that had the power of it. Hence death and the grave have lost their horrors. When we see the opening tomb, or look into the belly of death by faith, we no more tremble, but rejoice to find our best food, our most delicious repast in the belly of the eater. As christians, we derive all our meat, and all our sweetness from the grave of Christ. There the Saviour himself first tasted immortality in his human body, and from thence he derives his sweetest joys on the throne ; “ for this cause God highly exalted him.” As Sampson gave a part of the honey in the Lion to regale his friends, so Jesus bids us take our best joys and sublimest hopes, the food and sweetness of the soul, from his victory over death, and the blessings which flow from his resurrection from the grave. Of this we have a lively figure on the communion-table

table. There we eat and drink the best blessings of heaven. But whence do they come? All from the cross and grave of Jesus, the belly of death slain. Here we see Sampson's riddle fully unravelled. Out of the grave of Jesus comes our divinest honey. Out of the most ravenous eater comes forth meat, the provision of our christian table, and out of the grave, whose power had been irresistible in all ages, comes forth all our sweetness, all that regales the soul. This is the riddle, which Christ put forth on various occasions before his death, and which his disciples could not unfold. This he revealed to them at last, when collected in a church-state, in which capacity they became his spouse, or the gospel-church; and by them it was revealed to mankind. Plowing with this heifer we can find out the riddle, which otherwise would have puzzled the imagination, and perplexed the reasonings of all mankind. But believing the apostles' explanation of this riddle, we, like Sampson's guests, become entitled to the change of raiment, the wedding garment, by which we are qualified to sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

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OBSERVATION

OBSERVATION XIX.

GEN. xlix. 24.

—*From thence is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel.*

THE Epithets in this verse are commonly applied to Christ, and doubtless they are principally verified in him, who is “the great Shepherd of the Sheep,” and the head-stone of the building of salvation. But that this prophecy directly points to Christ, seems to me very improbable, as the subject of the prophecy is said to descend in the line of Joseph, from whom the Messiah did not spring. We must, therefore, look for the immediate object of this prediction among the posterity of Joseph; for from thence, says Jacob, is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel. Joshua, the son of Nun, must certainly be the great personage here pointed to. Moses led the flock of Israel in the barren wilderness; but he left them there. Joshua brought them to the green pastures of Canaan, where they did eat and ly down, and none made them afraid. Thus he was the best shepherd. He, too, was the Stone of Israel or Jacob. When Jacob had travelled in the wilderness till wearied, he found a stone, at the approach of
night,

night, which he laid as a pillow of rest. There he slept, and there he saw the vision of a ladder assuring him that the land on which he lay should be given to his seed. This Stone prefigured Joshua, under whose auspices Israel found rest in Canaan, after a tedious and fatiguing journey through the wilderness. He was the Stone of their rest. In him, too, they saw the truth and accomplishment of the prophetic vision given on the Stone of Jacob, as by him, they, the seed of Jacob, obtained possession of the promised land. Moreover, the Stone of Jacob was anointed and made a pillar of truth, a witness of the covenant revealed to Jacob on that occasion. It was also made an instrument in the worship of God, and called the house of God or his altar. Joshua was anointed with the spirit of God, the holy oil; he was a witness of the performance of the covenant given to Jacob, and by him Israel were placed in a settled state, so that the worship of God could be regularly and stately observed according to the injunctions of the law. Thus Jacob again rested his weary head on Joseph, in him saw the truth of the covenant of God and his Ladder erected, or a connexion formed between heaven and earth in the ordinances of worship, the means of divine intercourse between God and man.

In all these particulars Joshua was a figure

of Christ. He is the great Shepherd of Israel, who leads them to the green pastures of Heaven; pastures of everlasting verdure and eternal safety. He, too, is the Stone, on which Israel, the true Israel, rest their weary head and sleep in peace, after the fatigues of the wilderness. Resting on this Stone, we see the heavens opened, and angels descending to minister to us the blessings of heaven. Here the connexion between heaven and earth is established; the ladder by which we ascend to heaven rests upon the Stone of Jacob. Christ is the truth of Jacob's ladder. No man can come to the father but by him, and all the goodness of the father descends upon us through him. Here we see the covenant concerning the heavenly Canaan ratified; all the promises are Yea and Amen in Christ. He is the anointed Stone, and God's House, in whom God dwells, and by whom all acceptable worship ascends before the father. He is the true pillar, in which all the truths of God are inscribed, as with a pen of iron and point of a diamond.

OBSERVATION

OBSERVATION XX.

SONG, vii, 9.

And the roof of thy mouth like the best wine, for my beloved, that goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak.

COMMENTATORS differ widely in their interpretations of this verse; yet none of them seem to give any satisfactory sense to it. This has induced the author of a late paraphrase on this sacred song, to think, that some error has crept into the text. He would place a full stop after the word *wine*; the rest he would paraphrase thus;—"going to thee or to thy beloved in uprightness, *i. e.* with a majestic air; the grace of thy motion expressing the steadiness of thy constant mind, the aged themselves seemed to awake as out of sleep, and their lips were filled with thy praises." The word rendered *going*, he thinks, has a reference to the bride and not to wine; and may be supposed to carry us back to the meeting in the first chapter, or to suit some such occasion. This thought is ingenious enough, as is also that of his friend, who would change the *daleth* in *dubeb*, into the similar letter *rosh*, and the *jod* in *ishnim*, into *vau*, and thus, (placing a full stop after *wine* and

and putting the remaining part of the verse in the mouth of the bride,) would have it read—"It goeth down sweetly to my beloved, satisfying the lips and teeth."

Genius is exceedingly well employed, in endeavouring to let in light upon obscure texts of scripture: yet I think it dangerous, to propose any emendations of the sacred text, unless where the present reading carries in it insurmountable difficulties or palpable absurdities. Perhaps none such are to be found in the text before us: And supposing the present version to contain difficulties, I do not think, that any of the proposed emendations, tend to remove them. No copy of the original, countenances the full stop after *wine*. Besides, to put these words in the mouth of the bride is extremely awkward and outré, as she came to her beloved, not "with a majestic air," but with a modest blush, and every expression of humility. *Holech*, too, in Prov. xxiii. 31. is confessedly applied to the *wine*, and denotes its motion in the cup. Now if *holech lemishrim* in one part of Solomon's writings denotes the motion of wine in the cup or bowl, there is certainly nothing absurd in supposing that this phrase has the same sense in this verse, penned by the same hand.

Nor does the proposed change of letters, solve the difficulty in the least. It is well known

known, that the Hebrew *rubb* always signifies to increase or magnify, *i. e.* to increase in number or magnitude. If we change *dubeb* into *rubeb*, then, the translation must run thus—"It goeth down sweetly, multiplying or magnifying the lips and death;" A version far more absurd than the present. I may add, that even "satisfying the lips and teeth" is a very unplaussible phrase, as the palate, and not the lips and teeth, in scripture language, is always viewed as the seat and figure of taste.

As the whole difficulty seems to rise from these two words *ledoudi* and *leishbrim*, let us attend to the sense of these words in other parts of Solomon's writings, that we may see if we can get at the true sense of this difficult passage.

Mishbrim, a noun derived from *ishar* is to be found in Song, i. 4. and is rendered *upright*. It is a part of the speech addressed to the bride by her companions, the virgins, and certainly means men of refined love, a chaste taste, whose minds are unfullied by indecent or obscene ideas. It is a character of lovers—"the upright love thee." Surely not men of equity and justice, a character which has no concern with love, and may be where the heart is little susceptible of soft impressions; but men of delicate yet refined feelings, free from irregular desires.

What is applied metaphorically to the mind,
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is literally applied to wine in Prov. xxiii. 31. where the wine is said to move itself aright, *holech lemishrim*. Look not with keen desire on the wine, when it is red, or (in the ethiopic sense of the word *Adam*) when it is beautiful or charms the eye; when it gives its eye in the cup, or sparkles in the glass; when it moves itself to refinement, or, as we commonly phrase it, when it clears itself from mud. It is well known, that when liquor, in decanting, abounds with air-bubbles or bullæ, which rise briskly from the bottom of the glass to the top, this is considered as an indication of high excellence or refinement, and thereby we are invited to drink freely, and without fear of danger. Hence, says the wise monitor, beware of wine when so tempting, lest drinking to excess, you find at last, that it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth as an adder. How elegantly are the bullæ called the eyes of the wine!

Dud, in Solomon's style, not only signifies the object of love, but the tokens or evidences of affection. *Doudi* is an epithet appropriated to himself, when in the mouth of the bride, and is rendered in our version my beloved. *Dudim*, in Song, v. 1. means either his companions at the marriage-feast, or the cups of wine distributed by the bridegroom on that occasion: and so may be rendered either "drink abundantly, O beloved companions"

or

or “ drink abundantly of loves,” *i. e.* of the cup, the love token. These were considered as drink offerings attending the sacrifices on which they feasted at a wedding. The love-tokens or bridal offerings, which were given by the bride to the bridegroom on that occasion are called in the 12th verse of this 7th chapter *ath dudi*, loves, *i. e.* the sweet smelling mandrakes, and pleasing fruits, new and old, ver. 13. When the Bride speaks thus, she has the nuptial cup in her hand, which she is about to deliver to the bridegroom, as a sign of her acknowledging him for her husband. This was one of the love-tokens, and so must be included in the *doudi*. The author of the above mentioned paraphrase, is certainly right in supposing, that as the sin-offering was called a *sin*, and the peace offerings *peace*, so the sacrifices and drink offerings or nuptial cup at a wedding were called *loves*; the sign taken for the thing signified, a figure very common in the sacred diction.

Taking this key in our hand, I think we may readily find access to the meaning of this text. I have already observed, that *holech lisfrim* denotes moving briskly, or rising into foam, and that *doudi* signifies a marriage-feast, a feast of love or friendship, dedicated to hilarity and joy. In this view the text must be read thus: “ And the roof of thy mouth (the sound of thy voice) like the best wine, which

which moving briskly, or sparkling in the glass at a feast of love, or a friendly entertainment, causes the lips of the aged to speak." As if he had said, Thy conversation is so refined, elegant and enchanting, even the coldest heart must be ravished with its charms, and the mouth of age itself filled with thy praise. As a cheerful glass in a circle of friends warms the frozen veins of the aged, and inspires them with hilarity, such are the exhilarating effects of thy voice. Homer pays a compliment of the same kind to Helen, in the third book of the Iliad. There the aged counsellors of Troy are ravished at the sight of Helen's exterior accomplishments; here the aged are charmed with the graces of the mind, the more excellent and enchanting elegancies of female conversation.

In this view of the text its sense is evident and unperplexed. I hope it will not appear forced, particularly if it be considered, that *doudi* has the very sense I have given it in the 12th verse of this chapter, in the bride's reply to this compliment "Come, my beloved, —let us go up to the vineyards—there will I give thee *doudi* my loves," a rural repast, nuptial presents of mandrakes, &c. The bridegroom's words furnished her with this reply. I need not add, that *ishnim* signifies old men as well as sleepers.

Query, As *sharr* and *shur* signify to reign,

to act the Prince; and as the business of a Prince is to command, or direct the conduct of others, may not *ishar* to direct, be a derivative of this root? In this case *misbrim* in Song i. 4. may be rendered Princes; and so the sense will be "The Princes love thee;" and *holech lisbrim* may mean "moving princely, liberally, or freely."

OBSERVATION XXI.

ISAIAH, xxx. last verse.

For Tophet is ordained of old, &c.

TOPHET, or the valley of the son of Hinnom, was famous among the Canaanites before the days of Joshua. There was a grove sacred to Moloch, the great idol of the Ammonites; and there the heathens made their seed to pass through the fire to that abomination. When possessed by the Israelites, it was defiled by Josiah, who made it the butchery of Jerusalem, and a receptacle for all the filth of the city, where a fire was kept constantly burning to consume the dead carcases of beasts, and other nausea thrown therein. There, too, some criminals seem to have been burnt, and there they cast the ashes of the images of the idols which Josiah caused to be burnt.

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That this valley was a figure of Hell, is plain from our Lord's application of it, Matt. v. 22: "Whosoever shall call his brother a fool, he shall be obnoxious to a Gehenna of fire;" where he obviously alludes to the punishment inflicted on great criminals, who were burnt in the fire of Tophet, called often Gehenna by the Jews. It was an emblem of hell even in its first state. Molech is expressly made a figure of the devil, the ruler of the regions of darkness, in Psalm cvi. 37. where Israel are said to burn their children to devils, *i. e.* to Moloch his figure. The cruel pleasure that false God was considered as taking in the human sacrifices offered to him, finely represented the cruelty of Satan, who takes pleasure in nothing but the destruction of the human race; as the constant fire was a fit emblem of that fire, which shall not be quenched. Nor did it cease to be figurative in its second state. The wicked are the filth of the gospel church, the heavenly Jerusalem; and when the Son of Man comes, he will gather out of his kingdom every thing that offends, every nauseous thing, and all that do iniquity, and cast them into hell, where the unquenchable fire shall prey upon them without intermission. Then the idols shall be utterly abolished, as Josiah abolished their images, and every high thing which

which exalted itself against Jesus, shall be cast into the Gehenna of fire.

This valley was situated on the east of mount Zion, contiguous to the foot of the holy mountain; from whence it was seen in its fullest prospect, chiefly from the temple, the entrance to which was by the east. A dreadful thought this! Christians are said to be come to mount Zion, Heb. xii. 22. the hill of the greatest safety, and the most exalted joy. Yet from this mount we have the clearest discoveries of the depths and horrors of that abyss of wrath, about to be fully displayed, to be keenly felt in the coming world. Neither heaven nor hell were so clearly seen from Sinai, or under that dispensation of things which was there established. The law spake chiefly of a temporal life and death: the gospel reveals principally a life and death eternal. They, that despised Moses's law, died without mercy, died a violent and untimely death. This was severe enough. "But of how much sorer punishment shall he be counted worthy, who tramples under foot the Son of God?" From Sinai the Jews saw the first death in a form peculiarly terrible; but from Zion we see the second death, a punishment much more dreadful, a hell seven fold hotter provided for them who despise the gospel. None are so sensible of the terrors of the Lord, or of the horrors of e-

verlasting banishment from his presence, as these who have fled for refuge to the temple of mercy, and worship the Lord of Hosts on mount Zion. The blinded world see not their danger. Sin and hell are best seen in the light of the Lord. Tophet lay not near Sinai, but Zion. We are nearest hell when exalted to gospel privileges and despise them. Hell is set full in our view, when worshipping on Zion, that we may worship in reverence and godly fear, and to warm our gratitude to him, who delivered us from the wrath to come.

In this light we may discern both the literal and mystical sense of the verse before us. "Tophet is ordained of old." In former times this valley was appointed for the burning of children in sacrifice; "for the king, or for Moloch, or Melech, (such is the original word) it was prepared," it was consecrated as a place for his worship. Moloch signifies royal power, and the idol of this name represented the devil and every regal power inimical to the interests of the kingdom of God. Hence it is applied to the king of Assyria, the great enemy of the people of God. But in its mystical sense, it intends the more dreadful Tophet. As the first Tophet was ordained of old, and prepared for Moloch, the second is said to have been "prepared for the devil and his angels," the real Mo-
loch

loch and all his worshippers. Here, there is fire and much wood, and the breath of Jehovah, like a torrent of brimstone doth kindle it.

OBSERVATION XXII.

MARK, XV. 17.

They plaited a Crown of Thorns and put it upon his head.

IT becomes Christians to attend to the intention of Providence in every thing that happens, chiefly in what befel Christ, in whom wisdom reveals her greatest designs. The soldiers put a crown of thorns on his head, and we know with what view they performed that mock ceremony. But as they only did what "God's hand and council determined before to be done," it imports us to know what God designed by that circumstance. Now, I think hereby 1st. They, contrary to their own intention, were led to acknowledge him as king. Pilate wrote his device or motto, and the Jews concurred in putting the crown on his head. Thus he was acknowledged both by Jews and Gentiles to be a king, the Messiah of the Jews and the Governor among the nations. 2d. This pointed out the nature of all earthly crowns.

The Jews would have made him an earthly king, and by crowning him with thorns they gave a figure of the nature of all crowns of that kind. Every crown has its thorns, which sting, sharply sting the head of him that wears it. Cares and sorrows make every station of life uneasy, but these principally crowd the royal levees. 3d. Thus they fulfilled the prophecy in Song iii. 11. By a custom among the Jews, it seems the Queen-mother made the matrimonial crown, and put it upon her royal son on his nuptial day, to add a lustre to the solemnities of that joyful occasion. The day of Jesus' death was the day of his nuptials, the day of his espousals with the gospel church. Adam's wedding day was the day in which he fell into a death-like sleep, when his bride was formed of a rib taken out of his side. The Christian church, the bride of the second Adam, was formed in the same manner. At his death, he "made in himself of twain one new" church, Eph. ii. 15. The blood of Jesus is the only cord which binds God and man in the bond of love. This day of espousals began, like Adam's in sorrow, but like his too, it ended in "the gladness of his heart." The Jewish church was the Queen-mother, who weaved his nuptial crown. Obey Pilate, then, "ye daughters of Zion, behold the Man go forth to Calvary, and behold the true Solomon with the

the crown, wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart. 4th. To remove the curse of the fall was the great design of the death of Jesus. The very earth was cursed for man's sake. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth, said the great Judge of all. Thorns, in the mystic sense, signify barrenness, labour and sorrow. Carrying a crown of thorns, then, shewed the intention of Christ's death; that he came to bear our griefs, and to satisfy us with abundance of good things, that we may rest from our labours, and rejoice from our sorrows. No thorns grow in Immanuel's land, the new heavens and the new earth, which we as christians, look for; nor shall we there eat our bread in the sweat of our brow. Thorns and briars were set in the way of the Saviour; but he went through them and burnt them up together. Thus the crown of thorns became an emblem of victory, and a token of his having destroyed the works of the devil, and removed the baleful consequences of the fall. It served, too, to shew us the blessed end of our afflictions, that our thorns shall contribute materials for our crown. The blood of Jesus has taken away all their malignity, so that, now they have pierced his temples, they are not only harmless but beneficial things. Our momentary afflictions shall work

work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. We have not only reason to glory in the cross of Christ, but in every circumstance attending it, as all serve to display the infinitude of divine wisdom.

Love without end, and without measure
Grace.

OBSERVATION XXIII.

PSALM, cxxxii. last verse.

Upon his head shall the crown flourish.

THIS idea seems to be taken from the nature of the ancient crowns, bestowed upon conquerors. From the earliest periods of history, the laurel, olive, ivy, &c. furnished crowns to adorn the heads of heroes, who had conquered in the field of battle, gained the prize in the race, or performed some other important service to the public. These were the dear-bought rewards, of the most heroic exploits of antiquity. This sets the propriety of this phrase in full view. The idea of a crown of gold, and jewels flourishing, is at least unnatural, whereas, flourishing is natural to laurels, oaks, &c. These were put upon the heads of the victors in full verdure, and their merit seemed to make them flourish on their heads, in fresher green.

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The literal crown, which Jesus wore, was also of the vegetable kind, and the thorn of sorrow, never flourished in such vigour, as on his head. Now he has got the crown of life, which shall not fade away, like the perishing verdure of the crowns of other heroes. It shall flourish for ever, in all the vigour of immortality, and bring forth all the olive-fruits of peace, for his people. Its branches shall spread, and furnish crowns for all the victors, in the spiritual warfare.

OBSERVATIONS XXIV.

MATT. xii. 42.

The queen of the South, came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

THE law was a figure of Christ. Each of his excellencies, was prefigured, by some great personage, celebrated in the law-history. Solomon was endued with an uncommon share of wisdom, that thereby he might be a figure of Christ, as the wisdom of God. And as Christ was appointed to be a preacher, to communicate the divine wisdom to mankind, Solomon, as a type of him, both in his royal and prophetic characters, turns

turns the throne into a pulpit; and so brilliant were his talents of eloquence, so deep his knowledge of things, that his fame reached to the ends of the earth, and brought the queen of Sheba, from the most distant regions, to hear his wisdom.

Thus scripture gives us an account of two royal preachers, the one under the law, the other under the gospel dispensation. Both are celebrated for wisdom, and, it merits observation, we have a large specimen of a sermon, delivered by each of them; the former in the book Ecclesiastes, the latter in the 5th, 6th, and 7th, chapters of Matthew's gospel. Attending to these, we may be in case to judge of their comparative merit; and to see the justness of our Lord's claim, to pre-eminence in the art of preaching. Reading the latter, we must say—Behold, a greater than Solomon is here!

The subject and manner of their sermons, suit the different dispensations of religion, under which they appeared. As the law in its letter, speaks of this world only, and its enjoyments, while the gospel, the power of an endless life, speaks of the coming world, and of enjoyments beyond the grave; Solomon confines his attention to this world, and the things of it*, while Christ directs our regards

* He speaks indeed of God as a moral governor, superintending the affairs of men, and bringing all into judgment. But this only

to the world to come. As the law was a shadow, devoid of substance, Solomon, in the very opening of his discourse, gives the characteristic of all earthly things, even in the promised land, where all the blessings of the law were contained—"Vanity of vanities; all is vanity." As a contrast to this, when Christ, the gospel preacher opened his mouth, he spake of the kingdom of heaven, the land of solid and abiding realities—"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Solomon presents shadows to our view, even the king enjoyed no more: and who can come after the king, to improve upon his system of enjoyment? None of his good things could satiate the soul. But, says Jesus, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." The law preacher, pronounces every thing in his kingdom, vanity and vexation of spirit: even its music, wine, gardens, and all its pleasurable scenes, ended in sorrow and woe. Christ pronounces not only the enjoyments of his kingdom, but its afflictions and tribulations, to be sources of gladness

only speaks of God as the Ruler and Judge of the present system; the concluding scene of which is the judgment. He nowhere, in this book, speaks of the new heavens and new earth, which Jesus calls the kingdom of Heaven. Solomon describes a kingdom under the Sun; Jesus exhibits a kingdom above the sun, where the Lord himself shall be our everlasting light.—Without this key it is impossible to make the Ecclesiastes speak truth. Does the wise man, for instance, die as the fool, in that kingdom where there is no death?

gladness and joy. "When men persecute you, and speak all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake, rejoice and be exceeding glad." Hence the motto of his sermon may be thus expressed, *all is reality and joy of spirit*. Well, then, may we imitate the queen of Sheba; we may come from the uttermost parts of the earth, to hear the wisdom of Jesus; or rather, rejoice that his wisdom has cried, and understanding hath lifted up her voice, till all the ends of the earth hath heard the blissful sound. His wisdom makes us "wise to salvation. Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand, riches and honour."

OBSERVATION XXV.

HOSEA, xiv. 8.

I am like a green fir-tree; from me is thy fruit found.

THE barrenness of the fir-tree is universally known; nor is it less certain, that what has no fruit can impart none. Yet God is represented in this verse, as saying to Ephraim, "I am a green fir-tree; from me is thy fruit found."

To solve this difficulty, it is necessary to observe, that the Jews, in imitation of the heathens,

heathens, had long attributed the powers of fertility, vegetation, procreation, conception, &c. to various idols, whom they worshipped, with a view to obtain from them the blessings of fecundity, or to avert from them the curse of barrenness, so much dreaded by a people, destined by Providence, to propagate the Holy Seed. These idols, they imagined, took delight to dwell in groves, and that each had his, or her favourite tree, chiefly among the ever-greens, of which the fir is a species. And, as they imagined, that the deities presiding over conception, had their residence among these trees, and communicated the fecundizing virtue, through the tree sacred to them, their blind votaries commonly made the spot, where these trees grew, the scene of their lascivious gratifications. Of this we have a plain account in Isaiah lvii. 3—5. “Ye seed of the adulterer and the whore—enflaming yourselves with idols under every green tree.” See also Ezek. xx. 28—31. Hof. iv. 12, 13. &c.

That the Jews thus enflamed themselves, with a view to procure children, is plain enough from Hof. ix. 10,—end, “They went to Baal-Peor,—and their abominations were such as they loved,” *i. e.* they committed whoredom. Therefore, says God, “Their glory shall flee away like a bird; from the birth, and from the womb, and from the

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conception.

conception. Give them, O Lord; what wilt thou give them? Give them a miscarrying womb, and dry breasts. Ephraim is smitten, —they shall bear no fruit: yea, though they bring forth, yet will I slay even the beloved fruit of their womb.” Thus we see what Ephraim had “to do with idols;” he worshipped them with a view to procure the fruit of the womb. Convinced, however, at last of the vanity of this practice, he is represented in this verse as saying, “What have I to do any more with idols?” Therefore, says God, “I have pitied him, and observed him” with an eye of mercy, and now condescend, again to tell him, “I am the true green fir-tree; from me, or underneath my influences, is thy fruit or fertility found.” Dwelling under my shadow—thy fruit shall be as Lebanon. “If ye walk in my statutes,” Lev. xxvi. 3, 9. “I will make you fruitful and multiply you.” I am the real possessor of these blessings, which you vainly hope to find, under the green fir-trees. The fruit of the womb is my reward.

The christian church, is frequently called in the Old-Testament prophecies, “The mother of many children.” But from whence does she derive this power? Jesus alone is the green fir-tree, from whom her fruit is found. Abiding in him, she brings forth all the fruits of righteousness: sitting under the shadow of

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his divine influences, she becomes the joyful mother of children. Or, as it is finely described in this chapter, "They that dwell, or continue to dwell under his shadow, they shall live or spring like the corn, spread as the vine, and their scent shall be as wine of Lebanon."

The origin of the above-mentioned practice of the heathens, from whom the Jews borrowed it, may be easily traced, by the tradition they had among them, of the tree of life, in the earthly paradise. As God had revealed his intention of conveying life, first through the literal tree of life, and then through the Seed of the Woman, of whom that tree was a figure, and who is hence called, the *Tree of Life*, in the midst of the Paradise of God, it is easy to see, how a superstitious fancy, came to ascribe the powers of life, to some divine virtues, resident in trees. Thus the original, the saving truth, may be easily traced through all the darkness of superstition. The very vices of antiquity, were the offspring of a mistaken theology. So melancholy is it, that Truth, so pure, so healthful in her origin, should, in her course through this contaminated world, lose all her beneficial qualities, in the muddy and poisonous streams, which flow from the abyss of a carnal and superstitious imagination.

OBSERVATION

OBSERVATION XXVI.

PSALM, lxxii. 16.

*There shall be an handful of corn in the earth,
on the tops of the mountains, &c.*

IN the primary sense, this Psalm concerns Solomon; but many parts of it, have no fulness of truth, or even sense in them, till we apply them to Jesus Christ. The Jews themselves, allow it to be a description of the glorious character, and triumphant reign of the Messiah, of whom Solomon was but a figure. Commentators seem to agree, in applying this verse to the disciples of Jesus, at the time of his resurrection, prophesied of in the foregoing verse. Then the disciples, say they, were few in number, like an handful of corn, and yet grew and multiplied, into an abundance of fruit. Some learned Jews, howbeit, apply the first clause to Messiah himself, reading it thus—He shall be an handful of corn in the land, &c. And it is evident, that the clause may be thus rendered, and that this version is most agreeable to the context, as the whole concerns the Messiah. Yet the certainty of either of these versions, could not have been ascertained, if Jesus himself had not authenticated the latter,

By assuring us that the Spirit here speaks concerning himself, John xii. 24. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a grain of wheat fall into the ground, and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

It appears evident to me, that our Saviour in these words has this verse in his eye. The Hebrew *pist* signifies the minutest part of a thing, and as a grain, and not a handful, is the smallest portion of wheat, consequently the Hebrew *pistbar* answers exactly to the Greek *kokkos tou sitou*, a grain of wheat. Both are said to be sown in the earth, and to bring forth abundance of fruit. In this view, how exact, how glorious is the description of the Messiah in this verse! First, "He shall be a grain of wheat in the land or earth, on the tops of the mountains." At his death he was sown in the earth on the tops of Zion and Calvary; sown not to perish, but to revive and bring forth his fruit. In the grave he received the fertilizing principles of eternal life, which expand themselves in that innumerable multitude, that spring up with him in the likeness of his resurrection. Secondly, "His fruit shall make a rushing sound like Lebanon," or like the wind on the high trees of Lebanon. The fruits of Jesus are the fruits of the spirit, and soon after his ascension, the spirit came on the apostles "in

the sound of a rushing mighty wind," which sound has gone to all the earth, in the preaching of the gospel, bringing forth fruit to God in all who receive it in truth; according to the last clause—"They shall flourish or spread from the city as the grass of the earth." The apostles began at Jerusalem, the Holy City, and from it they went to all nations, till the multitude of believers was like the grass in number and in beauty. He is blind indeed, who sees not that this prophecy must have come forth from the Lord of Hosts! Devils believe: we must be brutes ere we can be Deists.

OBSERVATION XXVII.

JOB, xxvi. 5, 6, 7.

Dead things are formed from under the waters, and the inhabitants thereof. Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering. He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing.

THAT the fifth verse is misrendered in our version, must be obvious to the slightest attention. Dead things are formed every where, by sea and land; consequently to say "dead things are formed under the waters," is to say nothing to the purpose, as this is no characteristic

characteristic distinction of the waters at all. It would have been more just, had this description been applied to the land, as it furnishes us with a far greater number of inanimate beings.

To understand this passage, it is necessary that we should get at the true sense of the expression "under the waters;" as this will give the key to the whole. Nor can we attain this but by viewing the hell and destruction in verse 6, as explanatory of, and synonymous with the waters in the 5th verse. It is evident, that scripture represents hell as a place where Satan and his angels are generally confined, during the present period: and that this seat of darkness and woe is situated "under the waters," or in caverns below the great deep or abyfs. Hence the devils besought our Lord, that he might "not command them to go out into the deep," or, as it is in the original, into the abyfs or bottomless gulph. This place is also called *tartarus*, 2 Pet. ii. 4. and that this is the place of Satan and his angels is expressly said in Rev. xx. 1, 2, 3. This idea is retained among all the antient nations. Thus, the Greeks called Hell, Tartarus, and supposed it to be situated in caverns below the Atlantic Ocean, which they hence called *mare tenebrarum*, *i. e.* the sea of darkness. As Hell was viewed as a region of darkness, it was natural for that

that fanciful people to imagine that it was placed in the ocean, where the sun went down with respect to them. To be under the waters, then, and to be in Hell or Tartarus, signifies the same state of woe.

Let us now attend to the "dead things," which are said, in our translation, to be formed in this dark region. The original word translated "dead things," is *rephaim*, a word which no where signifies dead but by accident. It primarily denotes abjection of spirit, dread, consternation, or any object which excites these disagreeable sensations. Thus, it most commonly denotes giants, monsters in stature, tyranny or vice. In all the ancient nations, this name was particularly applied to that generation of miscreants, who built the tower of Babel. Though the sacred writers have not given us a particular account of the manner of the destruction of these monsters, who, in defiance of Jehovah, built that famous tower, yet tradition has assured us that it was by thunder, lightning and a deluge of rain, which destroyed many and scattered the rest. Swallowed up in the wrath of Jehovah, or cast into Hell, they became a figure of the wicked in general, chiefly of the worshippers of the beast, the builders of the mystical Babylon, who shall be cast into the lake of fire. In this view we see, the highest propriety in the expression "The Rephaim."

Rephaim are under the waters," the ring-leaders in apostacy from truth, are cast into hell.

[As violence, cruelty and rapacity, have always distinguished the race of giants, hence the word *rapa* or *rape* in the derived languages, still convey these ideas. Thus the Latin *rapacitas*, *rapidus*, *rapina*, *rapis*, &c.; the French *rapt*, *rapacite*, *rapide*; the English, *rape*, to *rap* and rend, *i. e.* to seize by violence, *rapacious*, *rapid*, *rapine*, *rapture*. The *p* pronounced *b*, this word became the Latin *rabidus*, our *rabid*; as also *rober*, Fr.; *robbare*, Ital.; to *rob*, *robber*, *robbery*, Eng. The *b* changed into *f* or *v*, as is common, this word became the Saxon *bræfen*, *refian*, to rob; the French *ravin*, and our *raven*, *ravin*, to *ravish*, *rover*. This last word signifies still a robber or pirate; and as a person of that description is always wandering about in quest of prey, it came to convey the idea of wandering, rambling, fickleness, in the Danish *roffver*, and our *rove*, *rover*.]

With regard to the inhabitants of the infernal regions, mentioned in the end of the verse, it must be observed, that hell is said in scripture, to have been "prepared for the devil and his angels." These, says Peter, were cast down into Tartarus, where they are reserved in chains of darkness, to the judgment of the great day. These were the original

ginal Rephaim, the proud defiers of Jehovah, heads of the great apostacy, who taught mankind to rebel. These, then, are the original inhabitants of Hell, with whom all the proud, and such as do wickedly among men are to dwell.

How it came into the heads of our translators to render the Hebrew *halel* by the English word "formed" seems altogether unaccountable. *Halel*, indeed, sometimes signifies to begin a work, but its radical idea is *piercing, striking through*; which, when applied to a living creature, must convey the idea of pain, torment and anguish. In this sense it is often taken in the sacred writings. The obvious meaning, then, of the whole verse, is—The ringleaders in iniquity, all that the antient world called Rephaim, Titans, Giants, Tyrants, &c. are tormented under the waters, in the deep of Tartarus, and are the inhabitants thereof.

Thus, too, the connexion between the 5th and 6th verses is clear. Though these monsters are cast down into the abyss of darkness, they are not hid from the all-penetrating eye of Jehovah. Hell is naked before him, and Abaddon has no covering. All things, places and persons, are naked and open, have no covering without, nor concealment within, from the eyes of him, with whom we have to do.—How dreadfully sublime is the idea!

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That there is something amiss in our version of verse 7th seems very probable. "He stretches the north over the empty place." May not the same thing be said of the south, east and west? As every part of the earth is equally distended over the empty space, our version gives no determinate idea at all, when it ascribes this property as peculiar to the north. *Spoon*, the word here rendered the north, originally denotes *covering, concealing*, and hence the coverer or that which conceals. As a noun it is often used, indeed, to signify the north, perhaps because the northern regions were little known by the ancients, or for some other reason unknown to us. But it seems probable to me, that in Arabia, in Job's time, this word had denoted the heavens, or the canopy of the sky, and that this is the sense of it in this verse. What renders this probable is, that the word *noteh*, in other passages, when applied to denote the exertion of creative power in distending, stretching out, or expanding any part of nature, is always joined with *Shemim*, the heavens, which are said to be stretched out, as a curtain, or a canopy expanded over the immense void, Isa. xl. 22, 51, 13. The heavens and the earth comprehended the whole creation. Planting, stretching out the heavens, and laying the foundation of the earth, are descriptive of the whole work of God in the

the formation of this visible system. Now, as the verse under review contains a description of the same kind, it is highly probable, that *noteh spoon* here means the same thing as *noteh shemim* in similar texts. Admitting this, the verse contains a fullness of sense, and a clear sublime description of the power of God in creation. He stretches out the canopy of heaven over emptiness itself, and hangs or suspends the earth upon nothing.

If this be not admitted, *tobu* here may signify the abyss or great deep, over which the dry-land is said in scripture to be extended. In this view, *Spoon* denotes the shell of earth inclosing the waters; and the verse reads thus—He stretches out the dry-land over the vast abyss, and suspends the earth (the whole globe) on nothing.

If it be still considered as most probable, that *Spoon* signifies the north, as this is the general signification of the word, the history of Captain Cook's voyage to the Pacific Ocean, will furnish us with a very probable interpretation of this text. Speculatists have long imagined, that, in order to preserve the just poise of the earth, there must be a southern continent to counterbalance the northern one. Experience has now demolished that ideal system, and clearly proven that the Pacific Ocean is assigned by the Creator as the sole counterpoise to this vast continent. This gives

gives a full sense, and an amazing propriety to the description in this text, "He stretches the northern continent over the vast abyſs, and ſuſpends the earth upon nothing." The more we become acquainted with the true ſyſtem of nature, the more accurate and philoſophical the ſcriptural deſcriptions of its laws muſt appear.

OBSERVATION XXVIII.

JOHN, xix. 30.

It is finiſhed.

COMMENTATORS have agreed to underſtand theſe words of our Lord, as expreſſive of the accompliſhment of our redemption by him: and, undoubtedly, at that time the ſuffering-part of his work was juſt about to be concluded by pouring out his ſoul unto death. When he uttered his interceſſory prayer, he had finiſhed the practical part of his work; John xvii. 4. "Father, I have finiſhed the work, thou gav'ſt me to do:" and now having finiſhed the taſk of ſuffering, he cried with a loud voice "It is finiſhed," and bowing his head, gave up the ghoſt.

Something, however, ſeems defective in the above commentary. It neither explains the

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reason of his uttering these words, nor of his uttering them with a loud voice. Whereas it is acknowledged, that all that he did and said on that occasion was intended to fulfil the scriptures; yea, that every circumstance of that great event was necessary, because they had been all either foretold or typified in the scriptures concerning him. Is it not reasonable, then, to conclude, that this expression was also intended for the same purpose; or that it is an allusion to, or fulfilment of some Old-Testament type?—Perhaps, the following thought may serve to explain it.

It is well known, that the Jews were commanded by God, to observe the first day of every new-moon, as an holy-day to the Lord. This was a law given to Israel; and none seem to have been kept with greater punctuality by that people. For this purpose, it was necessary carefully to observe the time of the change of the moon, that the people might have timely notice of that event: yet their ignorance of astronomical calculations rendered it impossible for them to ascertain that period, with any degree of exactness. To remedy this inconveniency, some men were employed to watch the first appearance of a streak of light in the moon's disk, and to announce the joyful tidings, with all possible speed, to the grand council. So soon as this intimation

intimation was given, an inquiry was made, whether the persons were credible witnesses; and, secondly, whether their report agreed with such calculations, as they were then able to make: in which case, the president proclaimed the new moon, by saying *mekadesh*, i. e. *it is consecrated*, or it is holy-day; which word was twice repeated aloud by the people, and ordered to be proclaimed every where by the sound of the trumpet, blown from hill to hill over all the land.

That the moon was intended to be a figure of the external state of the church in this world, seems evident enough. Both are subject to perpetual vicissitudes; interchangeably waxing and waning; while both derive their glories from their respective sun. Hence, God set the moon in heaven, that the solemnities of the Jewish worship, might be regulated thereby; exhibiting, by this institution, the mutability of that system, which, like its regulatrix, was soon to wax old, and vanish from the sight of men. In this view, the period of the death of Jesus answers to the change of the moon; and the appearances of the new dispensation of grace, introduced by the gospel, corresponds with the new-moon. This was a change indeed! Then "old things gradually passed away, and all things became new."

But to fulfil the type, it was necessary

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that this change should be intimated to mankind, and that in a manner analogous to that of the proclamation of the new-moon. But who should make this proclamation but Messiah himself; who with his apostles form the gospel-sanhedrim, wherein he is the sole president? To him all power in heaven and in earth is committed, and he is given to be head over all things to the church. In this view, we find his last words full of meaning, and evidently analogous to that which intimated the change of the moon. He cried *tetelestai*, it is finished—The old system of religion is come to its period, the law having received its full accomplishment in me, and a new state of things shall in a little appear.

That the analogy may appear more striking, it must be observed, that the original word *tetelestai*, rendered in our version *it is finished*, is of the same import with the word *mekadesb*. Either of them may be rendered *it is consecrated*, or, *it is finished*. See Leigh's *Critica Sacra*. Hence initiation into the christian church by baptism was antiently called *teleiosis*, and the initiated *teleioi*; intimating the change then passed upon them, and their consecration to the service of God. This may shew us, that the law made nothing perfect; its oblations could not purge the conscience from dead works. The gospel makes us perfect, by giving the holiness of the truth.

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Our great Redeemer cried it is consecrated—Now the spirit of holiness shall be poured upon all nations. This is the holy-day, “blow ye the trumpet at new-moon, sing loud to God our strength.”

We may add, that in imitation of the president of the Jewish council, Christ uttered this word with a loud voice; and, in a short time after, he ordered this change to be proclaimed by the sound of the gospel-trumpet through all the world. “Go ye,” says he to his apostles, “into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” Tell them that the old ceremonies and ritual institutions are abolished; and from henceforth, the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

To indicate the change of the dispensation of religion, it deserves observation; that the sun was eclipsed at the time of Messiah’s death, or there was darkness over all the land from the sixth to the ninth hour. Every one in the least acquainted with astronomy knows, that, according to the course of nature, such an eclipse could only happen at the change of the moon, by her interposition between the earth and the sun. Yet at the time specified it was full moon, being in the middle of the first month or moon of the ecclesiastical year, when the passover was kept. Why then, must

the sun be darkened on this occasion, as if it had been new-moon? Why the course of nature changed? Certainly for some important reason: and I know not of any other, but that type and antitype might correspond, or that the scriptures might be fulfilled. As the church had now lost almost all her external glory, all of which was soon to be turned into darkness and vanish away, that she might assume fresh splendors and shine in a light more divine, the glory of God rising upon her, it was divinely proper that this great event should be intimated by darkening the great luminaries of heaven, at the death of Jesus, and by their assuming fresh glories immediately after he gave up the ghost.

But at this time also it was really full moon. This too, we may be sure, came forth from the Lord of hosts, to point out some truth in the mystery of godliness. Now the Old Testament church, the typical moon; all her prophecies, types and promises, were about to receive their *full illustration* and accomplishment in the death of Jesus. How proper was it, then, that the moon of nature, the figure of that church, should, at the same instant, shine in all the fullness of her glory!

At this time, the Sun of Righteousness was eclipsed, by the withdrawing of the light of the Father's face. Deprived of the sweet sensations of the divine favour, Jesus cried with a
loud

loud voice, "my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me," This was foretold in the 22d Psalm. How proper, then, was it, that the sun should be darkened on this truly solemn occasion, that as he had borrowed all his radiance from Jesus, he might also participate with him in his darkness. Long had he represented Jesus as the light of the world; and now he must indicate to mankind, by the darkness which covered his face, the horrors of thick darkness which had fallen on the soul of the Saviour, when he came into "the hour and power of darkness."

OBSERVATION XXIX.

PS. lxxxi. 3.

Blow up the trumpet at new-moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day.

THE word rendered "the time appointed," signifies the *hidden* or *covered* period; that is the time when the moon is concealed or covered with darkness. This day was a joyful festival, returning every month: but the first day of the seventh moon was the most solemn of the whole; being not only the first of the moon, but of the civil year. This was called the feast of trumpets, as it was celebrated by the blowing of trumpets from sunrise

rising to sun-setting ; according to the command, " It shall be a day of the blowing of trumpets to you."

This joy was a memorial of the joy of creation and the joy of the giving the law : it also pre-indicated the blowing of the gospel trumpet, after the dark, the covered period of the death of Christ, when the form of the church changed, and " the year of the redeemed" began : and, finally, it prefigured the last day, when the trumpet of God shall sound, and the dead shall be raised.

As the Jews were ignorant of the true time of the change, they, in process of time, kept two days instead of one, as holidays ; the day after the moon totally disappeared, and that on which she began to be re-illuminated. The second of these days, however, was always considered as most sacred, as the returning light ascertained the change of the moon, and then only she could be properly called new-moon. Thus, Saul excused David's absence from table on the first day, 1 Sam. xx. 24,27. but could admit of no apology for his neglect of the second. So it is still. The day after the death of Christ, or Saturday, when the hope of the church was covered with darkness, is celebrated as a holiday by Israel after the flesh, while Israel after the spirit keeps the first day of the week, when
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the church began to be re-illuminated by the rising of the Sun of Truth upon her, as a day of rejoicing in the Lord.

This shews the propriety of observing the day of the moon's appearance as most sacred. The disciples of Jesus were as ignorant of the time of the change of the dispensation of religion, or of the meaning of the Saviour's death, as the Jews were of the true time of the moon's change. But when their Lord arose from the dead on the first day of the week, the hope of the church began to brighten: the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. On the same day of the week, the spirit descended on the apostles, throwing a *new* lustre on the old testament scriptures. Then the church became *new*; her light came, and the glory of the Lord rose upon her. Hence the first of the week is left in trust with the people of God, to be kept as a Sabbath, in memory of the new creation begun in him on that day. It is also our new-moon; a day of an holy assembly, and of blowing of the trumpet to us, while a sacred feast is held to the Lord. All this is exemplified in the practice of the first christian churches, Acts xx. 7. "On the first day of the week, the disciples met together," in an holy convocation, "to break bread," to keep the sacred feast appointed by the Lord; "and Paul preached," or sounded the trumpet, to them. Thus, the first of the
week

week is the antitype of the Jewish new-moons in all its exercises. It is so also in its design, to express joy in the returning light of the church; a light springing from the grave in the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

The joy of the Jews on the day of the new-moon was a figure of that joy we have in Christ, in the ordinances he has appointed. This is clear from what Paul says, Colloſſ. ii. 16, 17. "The new-moon, and the Sabbath; which things are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." In any other view, the joy of the Jews on that occasion must appear, if not absurd, at least extremely trifling. The returning light of the moon can never be considered as a rational foundation for such extreme joy. Music of all sorts, vocal and instrumental, was employed to celebrate the great occasion. Could such an institution have been worthy of God, had it not respected a better thing to come? Surely no. But when we see the whole as a shadow of the light of the rising Saviour, brightening the hopes of his church, and opening the joyful prospects of pardon and immortality, reason herself must not only approve, but join the Jews in crying, "Sing loud to God our strength: sing ye to the God of Jacob. Take up a psalm—blow up the trumpet at new-moon," the first of the week, the day in which the darkness past, and the light of truth

truth began to rise on the church. In Christ we have the body, the solid foundation of joy.

The joy of the new-moon was a law of the God of Jacob, Pf. lxxxix. 4. Joy was a duty to Israel. Yet in general they rejoiced without understanding the true cause of the institution. And is joy less a duty now? Did they rejoice in the shadow, and shall not we rejoice in the truth? Yes: we will eat the feast of our new-moon, and praise the name of the Lord. Jesus has made this a law in his kingdom, and set us the example. He took the bread and gave thanks; and in like manner he took the cup.

The feast of the new-moon was appointed at the time of the deliverance from Egypt, Pf. lxxxix. 4, 5. Then it was given as a testimony to Joseph, and a law to Israel. The festival of Christianity was, in like manner, appointed at the death of Jesus, the æra of our redemption from the spiritual Egypt. Then he set this institution in the church, as a testimony of our faith in him for life everlasting.

This idea may throw a lustre around what is said, Pf. lxxxix. 15. "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk all the day in the light of thy countenance." The original words rendered "joyful sound," mean "the sound of the trumpet."

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This sound denotes the preaching of the gospel. Now, what made the Jews rejoice, when the trumpet sounded? It was the signal of the returning light of the moon; that they might walk all the day, or day and night, in the light of heaven. Keeping this idea in view, with what propriety is our walking in the light of God's face all the day joined to our knowing the sound of the trumpet! This is the import of that gospel, O Christian, which is preached to thee! "Thy light is come: thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw her shining."

But, we have said, the first day of the seventh moon was observed as the principal festival of that kind. This was called the feast of trumpets; and was "a day of the blowing of trumpets to Israel." On it a holy assembly was ordered to be kept; and no servile work was to be done, Numb. xxix. 1, 2. This was obviously the figure of the judging day, which is to commence with the seventh millennium of the world. "Then the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first." This shall be a day of the blowing of the trumpet to the righteous: the sound shall be heard in the grave, and bid the dead awake.

This was the true, the ultimate cause of the joy which inspired Israel on this solemn day.

day. Their holy assembly was a figure of the general assembly of the church of the first-born, which shall convene on the rising day; when the Lord shall say, "let all my saints be gathered together to me." Then servile work, the labours and sufferings of the present world shall be at an end; and there shall be a sabbatism to the people of God.

Many circumstances, attending the exercises of the Jews on this day, seem to indicate a presentiment of its ultimate intention; or to shew that they did not only consider this institution as a memorial of creation, which was finished on this day of the year, but as a figure of the judging day, when God will make all things new. For instance, they imagined, that God passed a kind of judgment upon men at this time, for the good or bad deeds of the foregoing year; according to which he ordered his blessings or punishments for the next. For this purpose, they believed, that God keeps three books, one of the good, a second of the bad, and a third of those that are neither the one nor the other. The first is the book of life, the second that of death; and those that are in the third are to be transferred, either to the first or second, on the next expiation-day, according as they grow better or worse. The two first books have two kinds of pages, the one for this life, the other for the next; and it is on this day they

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think

think their names are written for that year. Upon this account they take particular care, whatever they do the rest of the year, to be well employed about this time. They carefully abstain from vices, confess their sins, using absolutions, fastings, prayers for forgiveness &c. ; after which they wish one another the happiness of being written down for a good year.

However improbable and absurd these notions of the Jews may be, yet it is obvious, that they derived them from some traditional ideas they had received of the process of the future judgment. Then, we are assured by Revelation, the books shall be opened, one of which is called the book of life, and the dead shall be judged out of those things which are written in these books, according to their works. On this day also, every man shall have his name written, or his character and fate openly determined for the future state of existence.

As a further proof of what I have alledged, the resurrection of the last day, was also recognized in the symbolical observances of the Jews on this occasion. Not only were the trumpets blown the whole day, symbolical of what Paul calls the trumpet of God, by which the dead shall be raised ; but the resurrection itself is evidently referred to, in the speech which accompanied the sounding of the trumpet,

pet, expressing the import of the sound. This remarkable speech is transmitted to us by the learned Rabbi Shem, Tom, as follows: "Awake, awake from your sleep; awake, ye that deal in vanity; for deadly is the sleep that holdeth you. Consider seriously in your hearts, who it is you are going to appear before to give an account, &c." A speech much of the same import with that used by Paul—"Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Eph. v. 14.

This festival was kept at the end of the *civil*, precisely in the middle of the *ecclesiastic* or *church* year: as the civil year began exactly in the middle of the church one. An important truth is hereby pointed out to our attention! At the second appearance of Christ, when the church assumes a new glory, or enters upon a new state, all civil affairs, all the kingdoms of this world, and all the æras which have distinguished their rise and progress, shall be finally abolished. On the visible appearance of Christ's kingdom, all other kingdoms shall be destroyed, and the year of their duration shall end.

But it shall be far otherwise with the church of Jesus. This shall only be some middle period, some distinguished æra in her duration. Now she shall rise to a new, a superior glory, when all her sons shall shine forth like the sun

in the kingdom of their father. Then all the glory and honour of the nations shall be brought into her, and lost for ever in her diviner splendors. Her year is not then concluded. Twelve is the number of the Lamb. She must pass from glory to glory, from splendor to splendor, till she has gone thro' her twelve states, under the immediate government of the Lamb, till at last the kingdom be given up to the Father, and, God be all in all. Then a new state of happy existence shall commence, undescribable by the tongues of men or angels, and unmeasured by suns or moons.

In the mean time, let us be careful to keep the feast of our ordinary new-moon, the first of the week: not forsaking the holy assembly appointed on that day, or neglecting any part of its instituted worship. Thus only we can express our hope of being gathered with the saints, at the feast of the seventh, the *perfect* state of the church. This period fast approaches; our *Tisri*, *i. e.* the period of *strength*, when we shall be strong to do the perfect will of God. "Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments clean; lest he be found naked, and be ashamed before Christ at his coming."

OBSERVATION

OBSERVATION XXX.

I COR. XV. 55.

*O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where
is thy victory?*

BROUGHT up at the feet of Gamaliel, Paul was perfectly acquainted with all the ideas and customs of the Jews. In all his writings, he has always some part of their law, some idea or practice common among them, in his eye, nor did any man ever know better how to accommodate these to illustrate the truths and promote the designs of the gospel. Nor was he less skilled in the learning and customs of the heathen nations around him. Hence, when he writes, he expresses his sentiments in the style of the people, whom he addresses, and illustrates his subject in terms and phrases, which they had been in use to employ in expressing well known opinions, rites, or customs among them. This could not fail to throw a lustre around his subject, to strike the understanding and fix the attention of the reader. It is only with this key in our hand that we can get into the spirit of Pauls writings: without it our commentaries must be dull and insipid. Nor can we, by any other means, discern the propriety of

the terms and phraseology he so frequently employs in writing to any particular church. This is most obvious in his addresses to the Jews. The sentiment is Christian, but the language is that of the Jew. Yea, he knows how to employ even their mistaken ideas of things in illustrating and enforcing the truths of the gospel.

A striking instance of the truth of these observations we have in the passage under review. Why death is said to have a sting, and the grave a victory, can only be clearly understood by attending to the ideas the Jews had formed, concerning these objects of human dread. These ideas are as follows.

Paul describes the state of the Jews, as a state of "bondage through fear of death." Heb. ii. 15. The reason of this fear is given in the preceding verse, "the devil had the power of death," and hence called the *angel of death*, or the *destroying angel*. In testimony of his authority over death, he brought it into the world; from whence he is called "a murderer from the beginning." Every signal judgment, also, which brought sudden death on mankind, as the plague or pestilence, was ascribed to his malevolent agency. He is the head, say they, of the *evil angels*, who slew the Egyptians, Ps. lxxviii. 49. He is also the source of the evils mentioned, Ps. xci. 5, 6. The arrow, that flieth
by

by day, the pestilence walking in darkness, the terror in the night, are all directed by Samael, the angel of death. At last they gave him the power over natural death, or authority to take away the life of every man. In virtue of this, when a man is about to die, the angel of death appears to him in awful terrors, with a sharp pointed instrument, or sword in his hand; from the point of which a drop of deadly poison is instilled into the veins of the affrighted sufferer, which instantly arrests the vital fluid. Hence the doleful lamentations, howlings and rending of garments, which accompany the death of their friends. Hence, also, the prayer they have composed for themselves against that terror, that their death may be the expiation for all their sins. No wonder though this idea kept them in bondage through fear of death.

The sharp pointed weapon above-mentioned, having the figure and office of the sting of a bee, or wasp, assigned to it, it is easy to see with what propriety it was called a *Sting*. By infusing a drop of poison from its point, a sting performs its office. The sting of death is armed with the mortal drop: but when we see it in the heart of Jesus, it is swallowed up in victory; it is lost; it is annihilated in the far superior efficacy of his salvation. This gives full propriety to the joyful

ful apostrophe, "O death, where is thy sting?"

But, finally, they imagined that this destroying angel had a power over men even after death. Particularly, the Midrash avers, that when a man is buried, the devil, the angel of death, comes and sits upon his grave, bringing with him a chain, partly of iron, partly of fire. Then causing the soul to return into the body, he breaks the bones, and torments variously both soul and body for a season. Thus one of their solemn prayers on the day of expiation, is, that they may be delivered from this punishment of the devil in their graves. Their prayer to this purpose in their *Berachoth*, is, *That it may please thee (good Lord) to deliver us from evil decrees or laws; from poverty, from contempt, from all kinds of punishment, from the judgment of hell, and from beating in the grave.* A similar form of prayer is still in use among the Mahometans.

Such is the fear of death which kept the Jews in bondage all their days. To beat an enemy and to get the victory over him are phrases of the same import. Beating in the grave, then, and the grave's victory, must mean the same thing. This is the victory to which Paul refers; the object of such alarming apprehensions, till Jesus entered these dark mansions, destroyed him that had the
power

power of death, burst the cords of the grave, and now holds the keys of the invisible world, and of death, in his own almighty hand. O Jew! wouldst thou but look into the new tomb, and see Jesus of Nazareth the hope of Israel, rising from the dead, with the sceptre of the invisible world in his hand, no more wouldst thou shiver at the view of the sting of death, or the *beating in the grave*. No more wouldst thou behold the gloomy angel of destruction, shaking his chain of iron and fire. No: thou wouldst behold with transport the angel of life presiding over the realms of death; no chain to bind thee there, but the band of love; no rack to break thy bones or torture body or soul; but the bed which the soft hand of kindness has spread for thy repose, when thy flesh may rest in hope of a resurrection to immortality! Then thou wouldst cheerfully join in the song of thy brother, Saul of Tarsus, "O death, where is thy sting?" Where its poison, that kills, or the dread it inspires? "O grave, where is thy victory?" Where thy chain to detain, or thy engines of torture to afflict the prisoner? "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

OBSERVATION

OBSERVATION XXXI.

PSALM XXIX. 2.

Worship Jehovah in the beauty of holiness.

COMMENTATORS think that the phrase “beauty of holiness,” is expressive of the dispositions of the mind requisite for all the true worshippers of God. No doubt, God will be sanctified in all those, who draw nigh to him; and holiness becomes all those who worship him: but I am rather inclined to think, that this phrase respects the Shechinah, the visible glory of Jehovah, in which he appeared to the old testament church, and in which he dwelt between the cherubims. I am disposed to think so, 1st, Because the word *bedar*, here rendered *beauty*, properly denotes some external splendor or glory, and such as pertains only to the object of worship. See Leigh’s *Critica Sacra* on the word. 2d, Because the beauty of holiness is said to be worshipped or praised, 2 Chron. xx. 21. “He (Jehoshaphat) appointed musicians to Jehovah, or to praise Jehovah, and singers to the beauty of holiness,” or to praise the beauty of holiness. Here it would appear obvious that, after the Hebrew manner, there is a repetition of the same thing in different terms:

terms: Jehovah and the beauty of holiness denote the same object. Jehovah may well be called the beauty or glory of holiness, as he always appeared to Israel in that glory; he dwelt in it, and to him only it appertained. Hence the pillar of cloud and fire, the Shechinah, is always called the glory of the Lord, or of Jehovah. This visible glory may be justly called Jehovah, as it was the constant symbol of his presence in the Jewish church, and to him alone it pertained. He cloathed himself with majesty—shone in unborrowed radiance: not like the kings of the earth, who derive all their dignity from their subjects. The visible glory might be also termed the beauty of holiness, as the Holy One of Israel dwelt in the midst of it; for which reason the apartment of the tabernacle, and after its dissolution, of the temple, where it rested, was called the holy place, or the holy of holies.

The Septuagint seem to have viewed this phrase in the same light in their translation of the verse before us, rendering it *en aulebagia autou*, i. e. in his holy court. The Syriac and Arabic versions render it in the same manner. This was the secret place, the privy-chamber of Jehovah, the king of Israel. Here is the habitation of his glory, or of the visible representation of the system of grace, about to be made manifest in the fullness of the

the times. Worship ye Jehovah, then, says the Psalmist, in the beauty of holiness, *i. e.* who dwells in the Shechinah, the glory of the holy one.

This view may, perhaps also, serve to let in a little light upon Ps. cx. 3. "Rule thou thy willing people in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness." A multitude of Jews were converted to christianity a considerable time before the Gentiles were called to partake of such a blessing. They were the first people, who willingly offered themselves to Christ after his ascension: and thus the first free-will offering, in the christian church, was made on Mount Zion, or in the Temple, the seat of the glory or beauty of holiness. Thus, as our Lord, arrayed in divine majesty, while the law stood, ruled the Jews in Zion the perfection of beauty, or gave his laws from the Shechinah, the beauty of holiness, the privy chamber of his royal palace in Judea. So now at the commencement of the christian dispensation, he is said in like manner, to rule his willing people in the beauties of holiness, or to give his laws from the holy place, even his holy mountain at Jerusalem.

But it may be said, the visible glory, the emblem of the divine presence in the temple, had left it long before the appearance of Christ in our flesh. How then can he be
said

said, under the gospel, to rule his church in, or dwelling in that holy beauty, glory or splendor? In answer to this we must observe, that what the visible glory was to the Jewish, the Holy Spirit is to the Christian Church. Jesus said to his disciples, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." How did he come? In the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance, or the most certain symbol of his presence. And how did the Holy Spirit come? In fire and wind or a cloud, the well-known symbols of the divine presence, Acts, ii. 1, 2, 3. This glory of the Lord appeared in the Temple as cloven tongues of fire on the apostles. 'This Spirit brightened the cloud of Moses, or threw a lustre around the law and the prophets: the word, the law of the Lord came in the radiance of the Holy Ghost, discovering its truth or spiritual intention. By the word in this Spirit, Jesus rules all his subjects still. With such propriety is he said to rule his willing people in the beauty of holiness.

But not only is he himself to be seen in this holy beauty or glory; but his people also are said to be in, or to be ruled in or by these beauties of holiness. Very properly indeed. The tongues of fire sat on the heads of all the disciples, and the wind or cloud filled the whole house where they were sitting. Thus all of them dwelt in the beauty, the glo-

ry of holiness. So when the Jews encamped in the wilderness, the glory of the Lord appeared upon the whole camp, as a cloud by day, and as a pillar of fire by night.

It deserves notice, that our christian Shechinah is called the *beauties* of holiness; whereas the Jewish one was only termed the *beauty* of holiness. This intimates the superior lustre of the gospel dispensation. To the Jews pertained the glory, "but to us the glories of the Lord." For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory." The garments of the priests were given them "for glory and for beauty." These they put on, when they entered the holy place to walk in the light of the divine glory. But the christian priesthood shine in robes of brighter glories. They are beautified with salvation." The fruits of the spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, temperance."

Kodesh, the word rendered *holiness*, is chiefly applied to the ark of the covenant, from whence the place, where the ark was situated in the tabernacle, is called *Kodesh Kodshim*, the holy of holies. The reason is obvious. *Kodesh* primarily signifies *separated*. This principally belongs to Jehovah, who is most properly separated from all other beings in point of existence, dignity, purity, and every excellence

cellence. Hence he is called the only *Holy One*. Every person or thing, however, dedicated to God, or *separated* from the common mass, for religious purposes, is called holy every where in the sacred writings. Jesus Christ is for this reason, most properly called the Holy One of God. Him the Father separated or sanctified and sent into the world. The Only-begotten of the Father has always declared him: he has been the brightness, the effulgence of the Father's glory, the medium of all the divine manifestations from the beginning. All the knowledge of deity has flowed from him; and all the religious worship in the universe is directed by, and offered up through him. Now, the ark with the glorious pillar above it was the chief symbol of Jesus Christ, and of the system of grace established in him, which was in the earth, while the law stood. It stood in the most distinguished place, was arrayed with distinguished glories, separated from all impurity, that it might be a fit emblem of him, who is "separated from sinners." Hence the glory which shone around the ark is called, with the highest propriety, the glory or beauty of holiness. Thus the ark is called the glory. 1 Sam. iv. 22. The wife of Phineas said, "the glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken."

After the ark was made, the visible glory

of Jehovah always dwelt upon it. What a noble instruction does this convey! It tells us that all the divine glory must be seen connected with, and shining in the face of Jesus Christ. We must know the propitiatory, the divine plan of shewing mercy through him, whom God has exhibited a propitiatory, thro' faith in his blood, ere we can behold the glory of the Lord. The glory of the Only-begotten of the Father is full of grace and truth. No man can know the Father but by the revelation of the Son.

As the ark is called holy, and its glory the beauty of holiness, so all persons and things connected with it, and walking in the light of its glory, are called holy. It is precisely so still. Believing in Christ, and walking in the light of his truth, we are separated from the world. By the great and precious promises, we escape the corruptions of the world through lust.

OBSERVATION XXXIII.

I JOHN, i. 7.

If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, &c.

IT is impossible to get a just idea of this verse without attending to what has been said in the

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the foregoing observation. According to the common interpretation, the light, in which God is, means the assemblage of his own infinite perfections. This is a light in which he dwells abstractly considered; the light of his own essence, unconnected with any external manifestation of himself to the creature. Thus says metaphysics: but how will this agree with the context? The light, of which the text speaks, is such a light as we must walk in. "If we walk in the light, as God is in the light." Can this be the light of the divine essence; the assemblage of infinite perfections? Then we truly walk in darkness, as we are ignorant of the essence of God, nor can have any just conception of infinity. It is too refined for our gross ideas; too immense for our narrow understandings. Yea, although we could form some conception of it, what comfort could a sinner have in the idea? It would fill him with the darkness of horror and despair, instead of the light of joy.

Others say, it is the light of infinite purity and holiness. But this gives no proper idea: for the very persons who are said to walk in this light of God, are said to have sin about them, even while in the light, ver. 8. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." So far

are they from being perfectly free from impurity.

But all who have been admitted to walk with God from the beginning, have always had fellowship with him in another kind of light. A visible glory, analogous to, but far superior to that of the sun, shone around the Messiah in his pre-incarnate state. It shone from between the cherubims, and above the mercy-seat or ark. This was the glory of Jehovah: and in this light, the priests had fellowship with God, walking in it as he walked in it. Now, what did this light manifest to the souls of men? What, but the knowledge of pardon and reconciliation thro' the blood of atonement. When they saw the mercy-seat in blood, they saw God in the light of love and mercy. When they beheld the mercy-seat, the cover of the ark, founded on, and commensurate with the law within it, they saw mercy covering all transgressions, and that mercy is so far from being inconsistent with justice, that God is just in justifying them that believe in Jesus.

In this light God is still seen. Christ is exhibited, a mercy-seat in his blood. Thus we see God hating iniquity so far, that he gave his beloved Son to die, that he might "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." This faith must dispose us to hate iniquity, and to love righteousness. Here we also see
God

God so loving us, that he gave his only-begotten Son for us, that the blood of Jesus Christ his Son might cleanse us from all sin, and furnish us with a title to life everlasting. Thus we behold the glory, not of abstract Deity, whom no man hath seen or can see, but of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ. Here God is intelligible, brought within the compass of our understanding: here he is amiable, engaging the heart. The light of love kills our enmity, reconciling the heart to God, and filling it with the sweetest sensations of reconciliation. Walking in the light, the knowledge of mercy as communicated through, and secured by the atonement in Jesus—walking, too, in the delightful feelings of the divine love to us, we walk in the very-self-same light in which God is, or in which he appears to the whole intelligent universe, who have got an understanding to know him who is true. God is light, life and love. He who sees him to be so in Christ, and feels corresponding sentiments in his heart, has communion with the Father and the Son Jesus Christ. In this light, like the priests of old, all believers have fellowship with God and with one another. They are all in the same light: they converse in it; they act in it. Strangers to this light, men may indeed have a fellowship one with another; but it must be a fellowship in darkness, dull and delightful

less—a fellowship with devils in the works of darkness, in enmity to God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God: and how can we love God, till we believe and be sure that he loves us: and how can we know that he loves us, but by believing that he sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins.

This must be the light in the text: for the light here mentioned makes such as walk in it see that “the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin; and if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Can a knowledge of the moral purity of God, while his love in Christ is unknown, produce any such effect?

OBSERVATION XXXII.

EPH. iv. 24.

—*true holiness, or holiness of the truth.*

TRUTH, in the sacred writings, is opposed both to a shadow, picture or representation of a thing, and also to falsehood or a lie. In the former sense it is often taken in scripture. Thus the law is called a shadow of good things to come: all its things were but a shadow, the body of which is in Christ. In this respect truth is opposed to it—“The law came

came by Moses; but truth came by Jesus Christ." Here truth can only mean clearness and reality, in opposition to obscurity and shadow. The law was no lie: it was a true picture of heavenly things, although not the heavenly things themselves.

The gospel, then, is the truth, of which the law was but a shadow or picture. In this sense the word may be understood in this verse. As if Paul had said, the law had a holiness, a mode of separating men and things to the service of God. It had a holy beauty, a holy place, a holy priesthood, a holy nation—all set apart for God. But this was an external separation, reaching to the flesh, while generally the heart was not right with God. Thus the holiness of the law was that of the shadow; but the holiness of the gospel is "the holiness of the truth." No doubt true believers under the law were really sanctified, or separated in heart from the corruptions of the world; but this was not by the law, but by the faith of the gospel preached to Abraham. The shadowy holiness might, as it still does, please the old man; but the new man is created in the holiness of the truth. Nothing can produce true holiness but the truth. He is truly holy, whose heart is *separated* from the present evil world. Now, nothing can detach our affections from the present world, but the knowledge and love of
of

of a better world; which can only be produced in us by the faith of the truth of the gospel. So properly does Paul call the holiness of the new man—true holiness, or the holiness of the truth.

But truth is also opposed to falsehood or a lie. “No lie is of the truth,” says John. In this sense the word truth seems to be principally used in this text; since Paul immediately adds, “Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour.” Holiness of the truth, then, in this passage, must be opposed to a lying holiness, or the holiness of a lie. A lie wears the semblance of truth, and so the holiness of a lie must wear the semblance of true holiness. But it may be said, where is such a holiness to be found? Surely the law of God prescribed none such.

To understand this, it must be observed, that every act of worship performed to a god, however contrary to the law of the true God, was called *kodesh*, *sacred*, *holy*, as well as the person performing it. Thus, for instance, Prostitution in the purlicus of temples, was made a sacred act among the heathens, so early as the days of Balaam, Numb. 25. Many harlots were employed in these sacred places, who dedicated a part of their hire to the god of the temple, and were punctual in offering peace-offerings, and performing

forming vows, Prov. vii. 14. Such were employed, in idolatrous reigns, even in the temple at Jerusalem. Hence all such are called *Kodſhe*, ſacred or holy, in the Hebrew tongue. This was a holineſs indeed; a dedication of perſons, ſervices and gain, to God; but it was the *holineſs of a lie*. They firſt believed a lie, that ſuch a dedication was acceptable to God, and then practiſed it under the notion of a holy act. Thus a lie was the mother of this holineſs. God gave them up to ſtrong deluſions, to believe lies. By this means, every vice came to be conſidered as *ſacred* either in one nation or another.

All this was a figure, or a pre-indication of what was to happen in the temple of God under the goſpel. The *great whore, the mother of harlots*, mentioned in the Revelation, had her birth in the temple of God; and has practiſed all her abominations under the mask of ſanctity. She is called Holy Mother-church; and all her idolatrous acts or whoredoms are all dedicated to religious worſhip. All her offerings, or prices of her whoredom, are all called holy—all are dedicated to ſome ſaint or another. She herſelf, too, was hatched in a cloiſter—the offspring of fanaticiſm and ſuperſtition. Monkry begat popery: and every body knows, that monks ſeparated themſelves from ſociety on pretence of ſuperior ſanctity. It was ſhe, that firſt made marriage

age unclean, which God had made holy: it was she, who sanctified every species of uncleanness, bodily and spiritual. She it is that has made the kings of the earth, and all nations drunk with the cup of her fornications. Such is the holiness, which has been so long admired among men under the christian name.

Paul leads us to the origin of this holiness. "God gave them up to strong delusions, to *believe a lie.*" Belief of the truth is the source of true holiness: faith in a lie the mother of a false sanctity. False worship is the result of false ideas. Men "changed the truth of God into a lie," and then "worshipped the creature." So necessary is it to receive the truth in the love of it, that we may be saved. There is no real holiness but the holiness of the truth.

THE

THE
Christian Triumph:

A
S E R M O N.

P A R T I.

2 PET. i. 11.

For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

SUCH as have tasted the first fruits of the heavenly Canaan, the grapes of the pleasant land, will be apt to say with Caleb, "Let us go up at once, and possess it." Having tasted and seen that the Lord is gracious, you cannot think of living without daily supplies of divine enjoyment, but cry, "Lord, evermore give us this bread?" To you my text will be precious: for if you have entered God's house of wine, and have got a sweet foretaste of divine delights, it tells you that in a little an entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

To escape the corruption of this world
O through.

through lust is represented in the fourth verse of this chapter as the great business of the christian life. For this purpose, Peter exhorts us to use the same precautions with a prudent general, who, in a place of danger, takes care that every soldier keep his post, or that the whole army march in the line or order of battle. Let the train of your graces, says he, be formed in the same regular series. *Let faith*, the first in the glorious rank, *lead up virtue*, or christian fortitude, and let virtue lead up knowledge, &c. Thus *giving all diligence to obtain the christian victory, or to make your calling and election sure, you shall never fall* in the field of battle, but animated to deeds of valour, and supported in the hour of danger by the great and precious promises, which have made you partakers of the divine nature, you shall obtain a triumphant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of Jesus Christ; and this entrance shall be administered to you with every circumstance of pomp and magnificence. Such a glorious prospect may well fix your attention, while I in,

The *first* place, make some observations on this kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; *2d*, describe our entrance into that kingdom; *3d*, shew why it is said to be ministered abundantly; and *4th*, point out some practical improvement of the subject.

It

It was proposed, first, to make some observations on this kingdom. And

1st. The kingdom of Christ may be viewed as it appears in the present world. In this view it consists of two parts; an *external* which consists in the administration of the ordinances of doctrine, worship and discipline of divine appointment; all which are intended to promote the *internal* part, the subjection of the hearts of men to Jesus Christ. This kingdom is an empire erected in the heart: all the subjects are made willing in the day of its power. "My kingdom is not of this world," said he, who knew it best. Wherever the power of this kingdom enters, it fills the heart with righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; neither of which are of this world, nor can be produced by all the powers of it. The kings of this world exercise authority over the external actions of the subjects, but the kingdom of God is within us. So that strictly speaking, the kingdom of God is rather in the christian, than the christian in it. He feels its power in the faith, love, spirit, hope and joy of it, but the land, of the kingdom is yet afar off. Israel were chosen to be a kingdom of priests in the wilderness, and God exercised a regal authority over them there, while they were not yet come to the possession of Canaan, the kingdom which God had promised to them.

2d, It is obvious, that the kingdom of which Peter speaks, must be a kingdom yet to be revealed, since it is here set before us as an object of the christian hope. We only hope for that which we see not. By the kingdom of our Lord in my text, then, must be meant the glorious state of things, which is to be introduced at the second appearance of Christ. This is it of which Paul speaks when he says, "the Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me to his heavenly kingdom," and what Peter calls "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, reserved in heaven for us;" the land which is so very far off, of which the new Jerusalem is the capital city, the city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. In this country all the present things will pass away, and an entire new scene will appear to our astonished view. There the inhabitant shall not say I am sick, as each one is forgiven his iniquity.

3d, This is the kingdom prepared for us in the eternal councils before the foundations of the world were laid. A kingdom which Jesus has purchased for us by his blood, and for which he is daily forming us by the discipline of his grace and providence. It is a kingdom, which he has disposed to us in an everlasting covenant never to be forgotten, the pledge of which we have seen to-day in the cup, which is the new testament in the blood

blood of Jesus. Of this kingdom Jesus is already possessed, and to it he will bring all the redeemed in due time; for he here assures us that an entrance shall be administered into it abundantly for all his people. Let us then proceed,

In the *second* place, to describe the entrance here promised us into this heavenly kingdom. And.

It may be observed in general, That it will be analogous to the entrance of the children of Israel into Canaan, the temporary kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. As the land of Canaan was the divinely instituted figure of heaven, so the entrance of Israel into that kingdom was a very striking type of our entrance into the everlasting kingdom, promised to Israel after the spirit. This, I hope, will appear evident enough from the following particulars.

1st, The Israelites entered Canaan by passing through Jordan. This was an entrance which God alone could administer to them, and not such as nature would have pointed out or reason have chosen. Had their inclinations or their reason been consulted in the case, they would have chosen the nearest way from Egypt to Canaan, provided no interposing river interrupted their march; a circumstance which could not escape the notice of a people altogether destitute of the means

of transportation. In this view, the way by the land of the Philistines would undoubtedly have been chosen, as the nearest and least encumbered. Yet however ineligible the way by Jordan might appear in the eye of man, this was the road infinite wisdom had chalked out for them. "God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near, but he led the people about through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea." The more difficult the passage was, the more of God was to be seen in leading them safely through. All this was obviously intended as a striking representation of the passage by which we enter heaven. An entrance truly divine! That we should enter heaven by death; that this frame should be taken in pieces; that all the powers of animal enjoyment should be abolished, and life itself, the basis of all enjoyment, should be extinguished; in short, that all that is visible of us should be shut up for ages in the dark mansions of the grave, in order that we may enter on the enjoyment of the christian hope, is doubtless a plan which nature never devised, or ever dreamed of. This is truly in hope to believe against hope. Nature would, fondly, like Elijah and Enoch, go to heaven without tasting death. But death is the appointed entrance: It is appointed for all men once to die. This makes
nature

nature shudder and sometimes sets her disputing the propriety of this measure of the divine government. Why should the wise man die as the fool? Why enter immortality by death? Why go to the regions of light by the gloomy paths of darkness; she sees the swellings of Jordan with horror and looks back on the wilderness, dreary as it is, with anxiety. A firm reliance on the divine promise; faith, which is the evidence of unseen things, can alone support the soul in that awful hour, when she first sets her foot in Jordan. Yet, christian, thou mayest descend without alarm, for this is thy entrance to the promised land, the kingdom of thy God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Jesus will do wonders in the grave. Fear not to go down to Jordan; for,

2d, You shall enter it under the conduct of the Saviour. Moses led Israel through the wilderness, but Joshua led them through Jordan to the possession of their hopes. While in this present evil world we often see Jesus in the character of the lawgiver rather than that of the Saviour. To deny ourselves, to stand fast in the faith, to be patient in tribulation, to mortify our members, and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world;—these seem to favour more of the rigour of the lawgiver, than of the mercy of the Saviour, as they are so difficult to be obeyed through the
they

enmity of our old man against them. Their propriety is far above the ideas of flesh and blood to comprehend, nor can the fleshly mind be in subjection to their authority. We must watch and pray, fight and agonize, yea feel the pangs of crucifixion, ere all that is in us can be reduced to the obedience of faith. But when this mortal shall put on immortality, and there shall be nothing in us to oppose the will of God, then our warfare shall be accomplished, perfect obedience will be the native fruit of perfect love, and all the fear of the lawgiver will be lost in the love of the Saviour. Joshua signifies the *Saviour*, and, in conducting Israel through Jordan, was an eminent figure of the saving character of Jesus; who redeems his people from death, and ransoms them from the power of the grave. Joshua never had appeared so great, so awful, and yet so amiable at any time, as when he led the chosen people through Jordan, Jos. iv. 14. *On that day the Lord magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel.* And when you set your foot, O Christian on the other side of your Jordan, Jesus shall wear new charms, and shine in a diviner majesty before you. To him it is given to cause you to inherit the land, which God has sworn to give you. It is the Saviour alone that can support us in these awful moments, and we may be sure that he will
not

not fail us in the needful hour. He says to you fear not to go down to Jordan, for I will surely bring you up again. And as he will redeem you from death, so he will also save you from sin; for,

3d, You, like Israel, shall enter Canaan in a state of purity and sanctification. It is an irreverfible law of this kingdom, that "there fhall in no wife enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatfoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie." To prefigure this important truth, the children of Israel were commanded to purify themfelves before they entered Jordan; Jos. iii. 5. "Joshua faid to the people, fanctify yourfelves: for to-morrow the Lord will do wonders among you." He will be fanctified in all them who draw nigh to him in his courts on earth, much more in them, whom he admits into his heavenly kingdom, the regions of unspotted fanctity. While in this ftate of imperfection, no child of Adam can pafs through this contaminated world without a ftain; and the beft have occafion for that falutary advice, *having thefe promifes, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourfelves from all filthinefs of the flefh and fpirit, perfecting holinefs in the fear of God.* But when death comes, we fhall be made perfectly holy and unblamable, even in God's fight, from whole eye the minuteft spot of impurity cannot be concealed. Jesus will prefent

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us in the presence of the Father *faultless*, and this must yield *exceeding joy* to you, whose remaining dispositions to sin are a source of daily sorrow. Washen in the blood of the Lamb, not only shall the sanctification of our soul be complete, but he will sanctify us “wholly in soul, body and spirit.” The body of our humiliation, whose tendencies to sin and death are so extremely mortifying in our present state, shall then entirely put off the old man, who is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts, and shall put on the new man, and be fashioned like to the body of Christ’s glory. It shall put on unspotted purity, the day in which it puts on immortality. Again,

4th, The influence of the ark of the covenant and of the priesthood shall administer this abundant entrance. This influence alone, and not the merit or power of the host of Israel, opened a passage through Jordan. The waters were not divided, till the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people had their feet dipped in the brim of the river. Then Jordan was driven back. The waters saw God in the ark of his covenant; they felt the omniscient influence, and fled. The priests with the divine ark went down, and found dry-land, where their feet stood firm, in the depth of Jordan. There they stood; there stood the ark of God’s strength, securing Israel from all danger, until the people

people had wholly passed over; Josh. iii. 14—17. This process of divine wisdom was intended to exhibit an exact representation of the manner of our passage through death, the awful flood which rolls before us all. This is the way God has marked out for our passage to the unseen world, and not a Son of Adam can either take another way, or find safety for his soul in this, by all the means which human wisdom can devise, or the hand of an angel could effect. The soul stands trembling on the dreadful brink; the depth of destruction before her, and the horror of darkness round about her. Where is human merit? Where works of righteousness we have done? Let them divide the flood, if they can, and bid the soul pass fearless through. The attempt is as impious as vain. By faith only we can pass in safety. Jesus is the high-priest of our profession, he too is the ark of the covenant, or our security from divine indignation, as all the promises are Yea and Amen in him. Behold, O christian, he enters the dwellings of Jordan, and by the influence of his priesthood, or by the blood of his cross, he bids the waters divide, and leave a passage for you! See the covenant of eternal life in his hand, sealed with his blood! This may disarm all your fears. While by faith you discern the influence of his meritorious death, causing the waters of death

death to fail, you will be as safe in death, as in any period of life. Nor can this influence fail in any age. Jesus has the same power over the grave as in the moment of his resurrection, and every Israelite, indeed shall find his influence there, and the covenant of life established in him, till all his people be safely passed over. He is the priest of every nation, kindred and language, and the covenant he bears is the everlasting covenant.

To represent this joyful truth, it deserves notice, that the priests' feet in Jordan stood upon stones, twelve of which were set up in Jordan, where the feet of the priests stood, and they are there to this day. Twelve were also carried up from the same spot, and set up in Gilgal as a memorial to the children of Israel for ever, of the power of the priesthood over the waters of Jordan. Josh. iv. 5, 7, 9. Now a stone set up on any place was of old, and is still in our own times, the ordinary signal of a grave. Stones, set on end, crowd our church yards to this moment, and as long ago as the days of Jacob, we read that when Rachel died, "Jacob set a pillar upon her grave," Gen. xxxv. 20. The priests then stood upon these stones, which were set up as pillars in the midst of Jordan, to shew us Christ's authority over the grave. The twelve stones were set up, according to the number of the tribes of Israel, to tell us, that although
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all who believe in Christ of every tribe, nation, kindred and language, must descend to the grave, yet Christ's feet stands firm upon every stone: he has authority over every grave. Let death then lay his stone on our tomb and seal it as he pleases; it avails little; while Jesus stands upon it and will roll it away in his time.

5th, At our entrance on the purchased possession the reproach of Egypt will be rolled away from off us. On the day when Israel passed over Jordan, the scene of their first encampment was called Gilgal, because, saith God, Josh. v. 9. Thus have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you." In Egypt they were slaves, uncircumcised and unbelievers. They had almost forgotten the promise made to their fathers, and when Moses at last reminded them of it, they could with difficulty be persuaded to believe his words. They had defiled themselves, too, with the idols of Egypt, and became fond of the profane rites, performed in honour of these abominations; Ez. xx. 8. xxiii. 3. 8. These circumstances, so degrading to human nature, were highly reproachful to a people, chosen of God for his peculiar treasure, and called to be a *holy nation, a royal priesthood*. By their circumcision, however, at *Gilgal*, including a solemn relinquishment of all idolatrous superstition and an avouchment of God

to be their God with all the solemnity of a covenant, this reproach was for that time entirely taken away. Now they were a free people, the Sons of God, and they had entered on the promised inheritance. The scoffers, who had so long turned the promised deliverance into ridicule, had now no more to say. God had done as he said: to the seed of Israel he had given this land.

Such is the original state of all that are chosen for eternal life. Children of wrath even as others, they are slaves to the most disgraceful lusts, led captive at the will of that prince of darkness, who rules in the hearts of the children of disobedience. Uncircumcised in heart, and children of unbelief, they walk according to the course of this world, forgetful of the important promise of another. And after conversion, when they have been saved from bondage and called with an holy calling, while on their journey to that place of which the Lord said, I will give it you, how frequently does their conduct in the wilderness too much resemble their former course? The abominations of Egypt are not wholly put away, and the law of the members too frequently prevails against the law of the mind. At last they die, and are gathered to the church-yard, and laid with the wicked in one undistinguished heap. *The wise man dies even as the fool.* This in all ages

ges has been employed as an occasion for scoffers to ridicule the hope of the righteous, and to say "where is the promise of his coming? for, since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." Such is the reproach of the sons of God while here. But the day draws nigh, when it shall be wholly wiped away. It is a burden grievous enough; but God shall roll it away. Circumcised in heart, our flesh wholly cut off, satan shall no more tyrannize it over us nor seduce us by his artful devices; neither shall we feel the motions of sin any more in our members. When our redeemer appears to swallow up death in victory, and to introduce us to the promised land, no scoffer shall any more be heard, saying, where is the promise of his coming? Infidelity, as ashamed, shall stop her mouth. When Jesus rolls the grave-stone from off our bodies, the reproach of Egypt shall be entirely rolled away.

P A R T II.

WE have observed that the kingdom in the text means that triumphant state of christianity, which our Saviour has taught us to expect in the coming world, when old things shall pass away, and all things shall become

new. We have also described our entrance into that state of bliss by circumstances taken from the passage of Israel through Jordan into Canaan. We shall now, as proposed in the

Third place, illustrate the manner of this entrance.—It is said to be *administered* and to be administered *abundantly*. This last word does not only mean that a large door shall be opened for our reception, or that we shall find a wide passage and easy access into these blissful mansions. It is more properly rendered *richly*, conveying an idea of the magnificent and glorious circumstances which shall attend our entrance into the heavenly kingdom. The apostle, too, in making choice of these words seems obviously to have in his eye the manner of a Roman triumph, which was celebrated with every circumstance of pomp and magnificence. This triumph was a public and solemn honour conferred by the Romans on a victorious general, and consisted in decreeing him a magnificent entry into their city. With allusion to this splendid ceremony our entry is said to be

1st, Administered, intimating that many shall be employed as servants or ministers to the saints on that illustrious occasion. On a day appointed by the senate for a triumph, all ranks of people in Rome were employed in performing the respective parts assigned them
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in the solemn service of the day. Preparation for a ceremony, so showy and expensive, required the labours of thousands, while the whole city went forth in procession, in their several orders, to meet the conqueror, to attend him on the glorious occasion, and minister to the honours of the day. Thus the city might be properly enough said to administer this triumphant entry to their generals. Christians! Lift up your heads, for the day of your triumph draweth nigh. The heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God, is the city of which you are denizens. There your victorious redeemer has entered in every circumstance of glory and magnificence; and he has assured you, that there is a day decreed for your triumph too, though it is yet concealed in the records of the eternal councils. Then the whole city of God shall be moved at your coming. The King himself in robes of state, attended with his angelic train, a countless host, the thrones, principalities, powers, mights and dominions of heaven, shall come forth to meet you, to minister to you in every office of kindness and respect, to add every circumstance of glory and honour, which may tend to throw a lustre around the solemnity, or to swell the triumphs of the glorious day. No dignity in the celestial abodes will reckon itself degraded in performing these offices of love to the

meanest faint. Every one will be emulous in testimonies of respect for the christian conqueror. - No wonder, when this king shall set them so illustrious an example. He will place the conquerors on his right-hand, and say, "come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world." But

The apostle seems to have adopted this manner of expression, to exclude the idea of human merit in procuring so high an honour. The word signifies *to be freely given*, or to have more bestowed on us than what is due. We become more than conquerors not by the mere exertion of our active powers, however vigorous, but through him that loved us. To him that overcomes Jesus *gives* to sit down with him upon his throne. "By grace we are saved; through faith, and that not of ourselves: it is the gift of God." What we receive here is freely supplied—grace to overcome in combat; and if so, much more must the reward we hope for, a reward so far not only above what we can claim, but above all that fancy can conceive, be freely administered to us. Yet although our own achievements cannot found a proper claim to such distinguished honours, *Peter* assures us this triumphal entry shall not only be administered *freely* but abundantly or *richly*. This word

word contains a fullness of meaning, which I shall open up in the following particulars.

1st, It shall be *rich* in abundance of odours and sweets. Israel had an odoriferous entry administered to them into the land of promise of old. They entered right against Jericho; Josh. 3. xvi. Jericho signifies *his scent* or favour. As any thing distinguished by its peculiar excellence is in scripture-language called *divine*, so the valley of Jericho, eminent by the fragrance of its vegetables, may well be said to diffuse the *scent of God*. Perhaps few regions have ever been so much distinguished in this respect, as the valley of Jericho. There the divine hand had collected together an infinity of sweets, whose mingled odours might regale the nostrils and revive the drooping spirits of weary Israel, worn out with the fatigues of the wilderness. There grew the palm-tree with its dates, the balm-thrub or balm of gilead, the rose-tree with many other species of odoriferous trees, shrubs and flowers, breathing inexpressible sweetness; while honey, dropping every where in rich abundance, from the hives of countless swarms of bees, diffused its delicious scent through the whole circumambient air. The air was balm; fragrance floated on every breeze. Such was the vale of Jericho formerly; and even after a course of ages, wherein, in common with the whole land of Canaan,

Canaan, it has been under the curse of God and exposed to the ravages of so many savage invaders, it still retains some venerable vestiges of its ancient glory. The design of providence, in making Israel enter Canaan by this vale, is obvious enough. It was to sketch out in a figure the surprise, the joy, the ineffable delight, which shall ravish our hearts on our first entry into the heavenly land. When Israel ascended from Jordan, how delightfully was the scene changed! Behind them was a wilderness, where scarce a single flower diffused its odours to cheer the fainting traveller, while before them lies the garden of God, rich in every thing which can charm the eye, or refresh the heart. Yet all this was but a rude draught of our entrance into the paradise above, and of that joy unspeakable and full of glory, which shall fill the heart of the christian, when heaven is first disclosed to his view. Our wilderness is no more fertile of delights, than that of Sinai. Every good and perfect gift comes from above. But sweet will the reviving scent of the tree of life be, delicious the flavour of Christ's good ointments, when the fatigues of life are over, and all the bitterness of death is past.

I may add, when the conqueror entered Rome in triumph, the whole way was strewed with flowers. He had an odoriferous entry. With richer sweets shall thy way be strewed,

strewed, O christian, into the city of the living God.

2d, Every circumstance of splendor and magnificence shall *enrich* our entrance on that great occasion. Nothing can well be imagined more magnificent or illustrious than the triumphal entry of the Roman general; yet all this affords but a faint image of the honours which await you, O christian! Was the conqueror clad in a rich purple robe, interwove with figures of Gold, setting forth his great exploits before the eyes of the crowd? A vesture dipt in blood, a robe of righteousness, a garment of salvation shall adorn thy person on that glorious day. Thy works shall follow thee; thy exploits, though performed only in the strength of the Captain of salvation, shall be narrated as wholly thine own. Nor shall he, who draws the piece, fail to set it off with every circumstance of embellishment: "I was hungry, and ye gave me meat; thirsty and ye gave me drink; and naked, and ye clothed me; sick and in prison, and ye visited me." These are the deeds of love; more glorious and even more difficult than those so much celebrated in the heroes of Rome.

The spoils of the enemy with all the captives taken in the war were led in triumph after the general. Jesus spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly triumphing

triumphing over them in himself, and the God of peace, who gives us the victory in Jesus Christ our Lord, will also bruise satan under our feet shortly, in the day of our triumph.—Moreover, the conqueror, whom the Roman senate delighted to honour, had his head adorned with a crown; he was drawn in a triumphal chariot, while vast crowds of the most honourable attendants surrounded him. So shall it be with the man, whom the King of Zion delights to honour. A crown of life and righteousness shall be the ornament of his head, clouds, the chariots of the almighty, shall convey him into the new Jerusalem, while multitudes of attending angels shall accompany him all the way. All the hosts of heaven, even ten thousand times ten thousand shall minister to him, and swell the honours of the day. So rich in magnificence shall thy entrance be, O christian, into thy father's kingdom.

3d, It is called *rich*, or said to be administered abundantly, to distinguish it from an inferior kind of triumph. Besides this more splendid and pompous triumph decreed by the Roman senate to generals, who had gained an illustrious victory over some potent enemy, there was another kind, far inferior in splendor, which the Romans called an *ovation*, and which they granted to a commander for a victory won with the effusion of little blood,

or

or over a mean insufferable foe. With allusion to this custom, Peter assures us, that if we perform these glorious feats in the christian warfare, we shall not have an ovation, but a curulis, the most honourable and illustrious triumph. As the Roman conquerors were rewarded with different degrees of honour proportioned to their deeds of valour, so Christ will reward every man according to his work.

4th, The christian conquerors shall enter the heavenly kingdom with *abundance* of songs, The triumphal procession among the Romans was led up by a band of musicians, who played triumphal pieces in praise of the victorious general. So shall it be in the glorious day of the christian triumph; Isa. xxxv. last. The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall fly away." Angels, these heavenly musicians shall touch their sweetest strings in the best music of heaven, while, in shining bands, they lead on the glorious procession of triumphant saints. Now they are sent forth to minister to them that shall be heirs of salvation; nor shall they forsake their charge, till they, as fellow virgins of the heavenly bride, bring her with gladness and rejoicing into the palace of the king. What transport shall Jesus feel

feel in that day when he shall see the travel of his soul and be fully satisfied! When, as Captain of salvation, he shall have brought so many sons and daughters to glory, and has lost none of all that the father gave him! When he sees all his enemies under his feet, and every thing that offends gathered out of his kingdom!

5th, Our entrance shall be attended with *abundance* of sacrifices, and that of the richest kind. Young men, leading victims to the sacrifice, with their horns gilded, and heads crowned with garlands, formed a part of the Roman triumphal procession; while all the temples were open, and every altar was loaded with offerings and incense. These were expressions of thanksgiving to their idols for their supposed assistance in obtaining the victory. Such shall be the employment of the saints in that day of eternal triumph. Then the temple of heaven shall be opened, and coming into its courts the priests of God shall bring an offering with them. Then incense shall be offered up to God's name, and a pure offering. By Jesus Christ the great high-priest, they shall offer up the sacrifices of praise to God continually, which is the fruit of their lips, giving thanks to his name. Conscious that they owe their victory, not to personal prowess, but to communicated aid, to the strength of the grace which is

is in Jesus, they will gratefully ascribe their deeds of valour, and all their conquests to his victorious arm, through whom they are more than conquerors. "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ," must ever be the song of the redeemed.

Let us, then, my brethren, put on the whole armour of God, that we may be able to stand in the day of battle. Our enemies are artful as well as powerful; they have many devices against us: but no weapon formed against the people of God can prosper, nor is there council against him, who sees the thoughts afar off, and whose power can baffle the best laid attempt either of human or diabolical wisdom. In this divine armour we shall be secure from danger: no dart can pierce it, nor can the keenest effort of the enemy hurt the soul that wears it. But let us not rest satisfied with a part of that armour: the whole is necessary. The fight of the christian is a fight of faith; without faith in the wisdom and power of the captain of our salvation we can do nothing in the christian combat. We are more than conquerors, only through him that loved us. Faith in the victory of calvary, and in the promise of bruising satan under our feet, is the shield which guards and supports the heart, and bids it beat high with the hope of victory in the day of war.

war. Yet Peter exhorts us, to add to our faith, fortitude, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity. All these are necessary for the christian foldier; and all are to be found in the armoury or fullness of Jesus Christ. To this we have access by prayer at all times; there we shall be abundantly supplied, for all things are in Christ's hand, that he may communicate all things to his church. Let us ask, then, that we may receive these things in larger proportions; that they may be in us, and and abound in us, that we may neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; that thus, giving all diligence, our calling and election may be sure, and we may never be led away by the error of the wicked, or fall from our steadfastness in the faith of Christ, but an abundant entrance may be administered to us into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

As the following thoughts by a mistake, were not inserted in their proper place, the reader is desired to add them to the end of the Observation on Matth. v. 33, 34. Page 14.

Upon the whole, if we be called to exercise so much caution in giving an oath at all, how blameable must the common, profane swearers be ! Such a practice is highly impious toward God ; and, it may be added, no less affrontive and injurious to the character of the swearer himself. To accompany every assertion with an oath, says that our veracity is so doubtful, that no man can credit what we say, unless it be confirmed by an oath. Possessed of a sincere regard to truth, why should we render our integrity suspected by unnecessary oaths ? Although a man had no regard to religion, it is strange that pride, or a deference to himself, does not prevent a practice, so degrading to his character. If he means to be believed, his swearing says that his word is unworthy of credit ; if he means to be obeyed or dreaded by inferiors, his oaths say that his word has no weight, or that he is considered by others as a man of no importance. The character of wisdom and virtue always claims the obedience of inferiors and the veneration of all. I would not chuse then, to let every body know that I have so despicable an opinion of myself.

With respect to the practice of swearing by
other

other beings besides God, it is obviously an act of idolatry. It is the characteristic of the worshippers of the true God, that they swear by his name; Deut. vi. 13. x. 12. Every nation swore by its own god. None but God can be witness in every case to our sincerity in swearing, or can avenge our perfidy. To swear, then, by any being, that is no God, is idolatry, or worshipping another god, than the true.—So proper is the injunction of our Lord in all respects—"let your communication be Yea, Yea, and Nay, Nay; for whatsoever is more than that cometh of the evil one."

F I N I S.



